

75¢

# Bitter Sweet

WESTERN MAINE  
PERSPECTIVES

NOVEMBER NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY ONE

VOLUME FIVE, NUMBER ONE



"We Gather Together"—woodblock print by Jean Randall

## Of Thanksgiving & Venison

Wood Cutting in Kezar Falls

Scott Perry's Eye on Wild Deer

Bob Verreault: A Diamond in Lewiston

South Berwick Writers: Sarah Orne Jewett

Gladys Hasty Carroll by Jack Barnes

Maine's Eldest Civil War Hero: Charles H. George of Hebron



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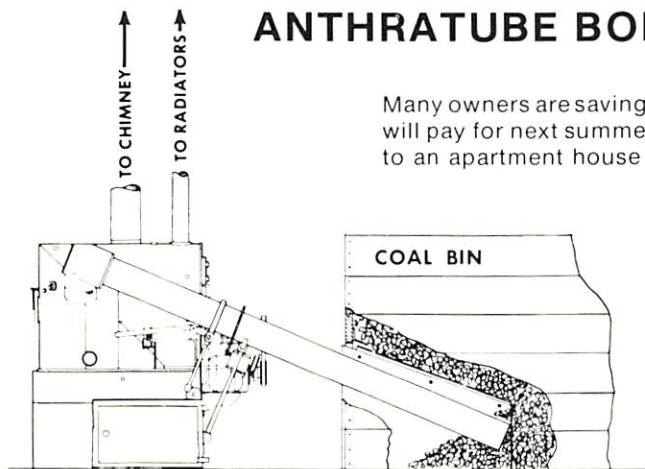
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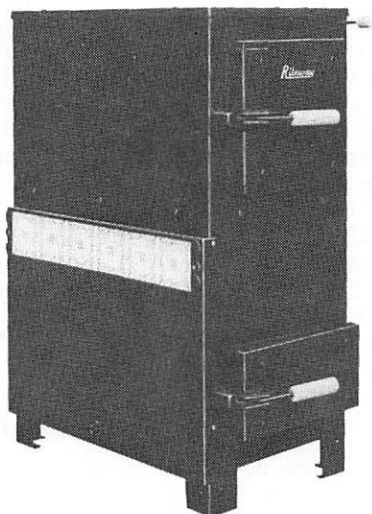
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# Bitter Sweet Views

## Reflections on our 4th Birthday

Many times during this past year people have asked us whence comes the name **BitterSweet**, the name given the publication at its first issue in November of 1977.

It would be easy to say, "Why, it's named for the plant, of course." The North American plant, indicative of its name, is a relative of the deadly nightshade—sweet in the appearance of its berry, bitter in its poisonous nature. As a symbol, the plant is explanation enough. But **BitterSweet**, the magazine, is much more.

It stands, first of all, as its original (and once-again) publishers intended, for the times in which we live: the transition between past and future, the delicate balance between preservation and progress.

It stands, in an even more real way, for the nature of life in this still

largely rural state. Life in Maine is bitter-sweet, as *Webster's* confirms: "pleasure alloyed with pain."

November, our birthday month, is exactly it: the sweet spice of autumn color fading fast, drifting down to crunch brownly in the blue rime of frozen puddles; leaving bare black branches stitched across violently beautiful lead-gray and scarlet skies. Bitter and sweet alternate all the time now.

There's a certain irony about our bittersweet prayer for at least 8 feet of snow this winter to ease the economic burden of three barren ski seasons. Winter is, itself, a cause for both pleasure and pain. Therein lies a tale of praise and woe concerning our housing situation.

## FmHA and the Solar Home

The Maine branches of Farmers Home Administration and Office of Energy Resources deserve great praise for their innovation in the national housing field. Together they have sponsored a competition for solar homes and will be offering the winning designs for building. Among the five prize winners was **Stephen Thomas of Solar Concepts, Inc.**,

Windham (whose own solar home was featured in Dec. 1980 **BitterSweet**).

The winning designs can each be constructed for less than \$34,000 for a 1000 sq. ft. house and probably heated for \$150-300 a year. All reflect traditional Maine architecture and offer housing which is "energy efficient and affordable," according to Gordon Weil, OER director. Maine is the first state to solicit what we believe is the only sane solution to our future energy problems. The woe is that *only* the people who qualify for FmHA loans will be building them—where are the agencies and institutions who would offer affordable housing to people who make less than FmHA minimum and who need the efficiency more? (And that's a large percentage of this state's rural people.) *There's* a bittersweet idea that our legislators should be pondering—and soon.

## Printmaker Jean Randall

As is frequently true for artists, bitter have been the roots of our cover artist Jean Randall's struggle to live and to work, but sweet are the fruits of her labors.

# Bitter Sweet

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**Phone No.:** 207/743-9005.


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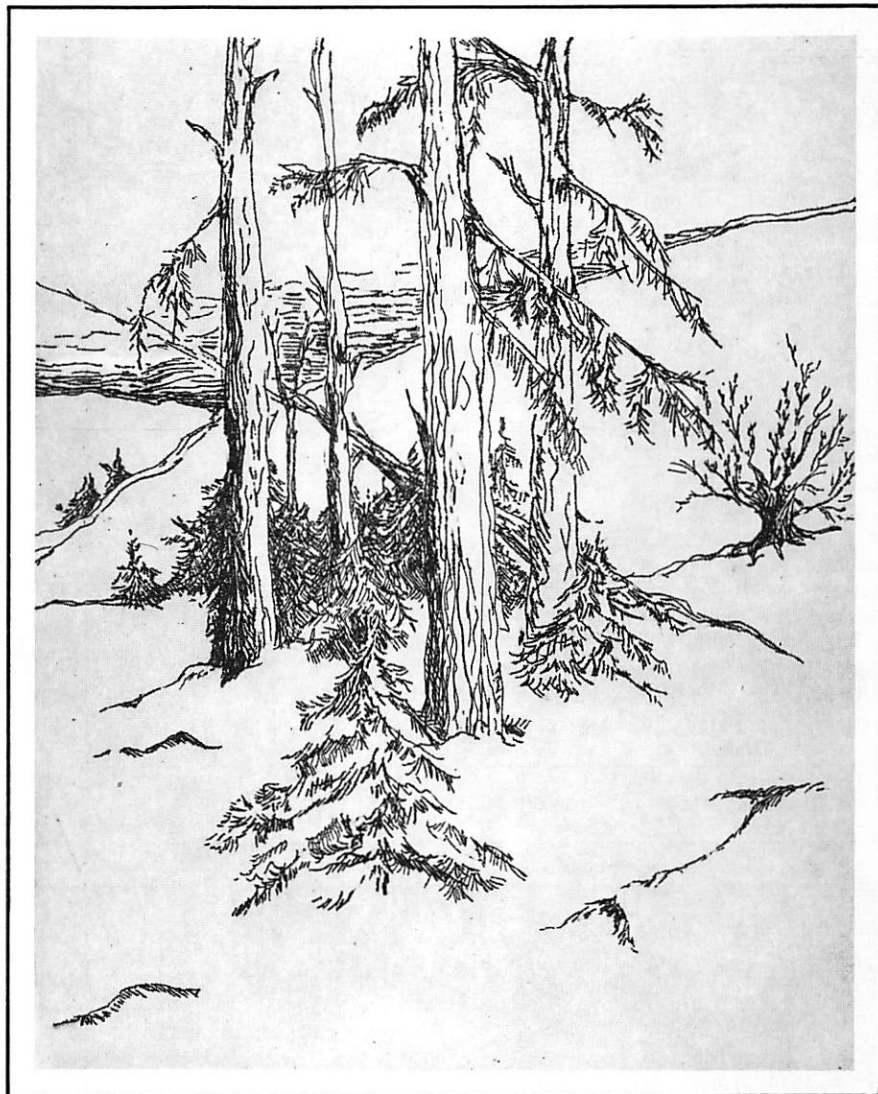
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# Cross Roads



"Plain Pine"—zinc plate etching

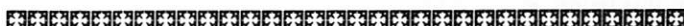
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The Otisfield printmaker has built her own house, grown her own food (see **BitterSweet**, February, 1978) and now is seeing recognition from one of the state's foremost galleries.

The Joan Whitney Payson Gallery of Art at Westbrook College will feature a show of Randall's art called: "Woodcut Prints in Multiple Overlays" from November 4 to December 20. (See "Goings On" for gallery hours.) In addition to the exquisite nature-inspired prints such as "Greengage Fields" and "Seed Saving," the exhibit will also include work by Prospect Harbor sculptor **Chenoweth Hall**.

Hall's show, entitled "Ancient Mystique of Stone," also contains work in wood—all designed to be touched by the viewer. She will explain her materials and methods in a gallery talk on Weds., Nov. 4 from 12:15 to 1:00 p.m. Each artist works in a style "at once bold and sensitive and evocative of nature," according to gallery spokesperson Antoinette Jackman.

### Finally: A Birthday Present

From us to you—a special holiday recipe:

### BitterSweet Chocolate-topped Custard Pie

*unbaked 9" pie shell*

*4 eggs*

*milk*

*1/2 cup sugar*

*1/2 tsp. salt*

*grating of nutmeg*

*1/2 tsp. vanilla extract*

*1/2 cup semi-sweet choc. pieces*

*1/2 square cooking chocolate,  
grated.*

Brush pie shell with small amount slightly beaten white from 1 egg. Add white to remaining eggs, beat slightly. Scald 2-1/2 cups milk, pour over sugar, eggs, salt, nutmeg, vanilla. Mix well and pour into shell. Bake 425° for 25-30 min. Cool. Melt chocolates together. Add 2 Tbsp. milk to thicken. Spread evenly over pie.

It should be obvious now that, though it isn't easy to live here, life inland Maine contains much that's special. Many people would live nowhere else. As we enter into our fifth year, you can be sure that **BitterSweet** will continue to cover all aspects of that life.

*Nancy Marcotte*

## MAINE'S ELDEST BOY IN BLUE

It is dawn of December 13, 1862, below Marye's Heights at Fredericksburg, Virginia, southside the Rapahannock. Along this lowland river plain lies a dense cold fog, concealing most of the 113,000 Union troops arranged in five corps—the First, Third, Sixth, Ninth, and Seventh—in a southeast-to-northwest battle line, the Fifth Corps held in reserve just north of the river. General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, 80,000 strong, are embedded on far superior rock-ribbed hills awaiting assaults, in full knowledge of their adversary's strength and intent. As the fog lifts, thousands of soldiers (notably those in the Northern Army) conclude their last letters home to Mother or Sweetheart and agree to honor sacred trusts for their buddies—depending on survivals. Among them is Corporal Charles George, 28 years, 3 months, of Company E in Lt. Col. C. W. Tilden's 16th Maine Infantry. He is writing to his wife Ruth, at home in Hebron, telling her of his promotion twelve days previously; and that he is older than three-fourths of the men in uniform. He tells something funny that happened; mentions desertions, low morale, a tangible foreboding; he thanks her for her letters; says the men look up to him for advice; wants to be a good leader; asks her to remember in her prayers all those whose lives are in danger; sends his everlasting love.

By ten o'clock, sunlight has amply dispelled the lifting fog. Impetuous shots from the Rebel skirmishers begin to ring out. At that hour Major General William B. Franklin's Grand Division (6th and 1st Corps) lunges forward in a huge assault, with General Meade's Division of Pennsylvanians in front and General Gibbon's in support right behind.

Despite supreme gallantry, Meade's men are slaughtered, as are thousands in other corps units

elsewhere on the frightful battleground. A mere mite of humanity amid these murderous moves, Cpl. George goes forward over the steeper terrain with Colonel Adrian Root's 1st Brigade (mostly recent enlistments in the 94th, 104th, 105th New York, 107th Pennsylvania, and 16th Maine). The brigade is part of Brigadier General John F. Reynolds' 1st Corps (47 regiments, 4 cavalry regiments, 13 artillery batteries)—these soldiers being only half of Major General Franklin's Left Grand Division, which with the Center Grand Division of Major General Joseph Hooker and the Right Grand Division of Major General Edwin V. Sumner comprise the Army of the Potomac under Major General Everett Burnside.

Burnside, regrettably an abysmal tactician for a battle that has been an entire month in the making, leads them into forty-odd hours of hell—a hell that for countless privates lasts a lifetime, whether twenty seconds or eighty years.<sup>1</sup>

Corporal George, catching a glimpse of the flag of the 16th Maine out of a corner of his immediate horizon and noticing men dropping here and there, runs fiercely with a platoon of E Company. He spots a nest of gray figures up ahead half hidden behind rocks; yelling men shrieking defiance and issuing blazing sheets of leaden hail. He aims his Springfield, long loaded for the dreadful moment, and, quailless, fires into their offending mass. Suddenly Charles cries out in half-subdued shock as pain shoots through his shattered right arm—a flesh wound, yes, but bone is also broken. He is one of Fredericksburg's incredible 9600 wounded, one of its 12,653 casualties.<sup>2</sup>

Charles wraps a neckerchief about his upper arm and tightens it to reduce bleeding. By using his muzzle-loader for a resting support along his

right forearm, Charles inventively saves his weapon. He slowly retreats. Medical considerations are nonexistent—for now, anyway. "The Minie ball has kept on agoin'," Charles believes. It is hours before he gets field hospital attention. Army surgeons choose to amputate but this soldier will have none of it, is adamantly against it. He dodges from hospital to hospital, staying long enough in each to get dressings changed, but leaving before the operation can be performed. The corporal is gambling with his life.

It is during Christmastide in a Washington hospital that he meets and speaks with Abraham Lincoln, whom he sizes up as "a fine looking man who belies stories of his homeliness and ill-fitting clothes."<sup>3</sup> One other man he meets briefly on several chance visits: a bearded fellow who goes about always with stationery, writing letters for the sick and doing



often menial errands, especially for the dying. In the sleepless early morning hours, Cpl. George sees this graybeard making rounds and beckons him with his left arm to draw near. As the Maine soldier dictates a letter to Ruth, his wife, he learns that his scribe is a volunteer nurse, a Mr. Whitman. Only years later will he realize that the kind gentleman was Walt Whitman.<sup>4</sup> Cpl. George, it seems, took a real chance and won, though for the next seventy-eight years he will maneuver with a nearly useless right arm.

A native of Plymouth, New Hampshire, Charles was the fifth of nine children born to William and Mary Darling George. Though Mary had been born in Campton (eight miles north on the Mad River just before it empties into the Pemigewasset), William had been born in Plymouth, for his father, King, was an early settler of that town. King, a Congregationalist and a Whig, had married twice, both Eatons, his second wife a sister of his first. King farmed his acres well, raised four sons—Asa, David, Eaton, and William—and died at eighty-seven. William George, a genius at mechanical handicraft, spent his lifetime in his hometown, highly respected among solid citizens.

Charles was educated in the Plymouth schools. At eighteen, he left schooling to work on a farm. Later he earned wages in a woolen mill at Fisherville, then seven miles southeast of Worcester, prior to moving to Natick, Massachusetts, to learn the shoemaker's trade. Somehow, somehow, about this time young Charles met a young lady from Minot, Maine—Ruth A. Gurney (Dec. 6, 1838 - Aug. 16, 1919), daughter of Samuel and Lucy Gurney. She became his bride on November 25, 1854, when not quite sixteen. They lived in Natick where he cobbled and worked in express trucking with his brother Daniel, until early in 1860 when they moved to Hebron, Oxford County, Maine, "the next town over" from Minot.

One can guess that the young wife and mother easily swayed her husband to the wisdom of living near her people and raising their family on spacious farmland and wooded countryside. Here Charles built a two-and-a-half story square house that yet stands in solid strength a country mile west of Hebron Academy and village. Here they raised their five children: Arthur E. (1860 - 1942), Herman E. (1865 - 1937), Nettie Frances (1868 - 1870), Minnie B. (1879 - 1963), and Gertie M. (1881 - 1976).<sup>5</sup>

The Georges' happy, Currier & Ives-like family life was soon interrupted, however. Intimations of the dark months ahead probably were recognized in 1861 when Charles' younger brother Daniel, 24, enlisted on May 22nd from Roxbury and mustered in with Co. D, First Mass. Vol. Inf. Brother Daniel served

nearly three years until discharged for disability (wounds) on March 13, 1864.<sup>6</sup> Daniel's reports of many hard battles may have been a motive in deciding Charles to enlist at Hebron on August 4, 1862, one of seventy-two men credited to this small town. Ten days later he arrived in Augusta and organized with the 16th Maine Infantry, which regiment left their state on August 19th. They camped at Arlington Heights until September 6th. Then began grueling months of marching.



*The C. H. George house in Hebron, now owned by Matti & Silvia Heikkinen*

For most of the next ten days, toughening up all the way, the 16th Maine marched into Maryland, where they were tried out in their first heavy baptism of fire: Antietam. They drew duty near Sharpsburg until October 28th. During the next ten days they marched to Warrenton, Virginia; and after three days of rest Charles and his 16th Maine executed a forced march to Rapahannock Station where they had duty until November 19th. Then they moved to Brooks Station until December 11th, followed by the blood bath of Fredericksburg. Although Cpl. George was discharged for disability on January 31, 1863,<sup>7</sup> his regiment fought on until mustered out June 5, 1865, having lost 181 men in action and another 259 by disease.<sup>8</sup>

Cpl. George wouldn't mind our sharing another minor episode. An Augusta, Maine, mother persuaded him to be by her side for an appointment with President Lincoln at the Executive Mansion. She was going to plead for the return of her fourteen-year-old who, after lying about his age to "join up," had second thoughts about the glory. "Someone had to go with her and I was chosen. I presume it was because of my

crippled arm that would induce the President to be lenient. It was unnecessary. Lincoln was a good scout and a clever fellow."<sup>9</sup>

Back home in Maine, Mr. George was a highly social man and well known in civic circles. He joined the Masons in 1868 at South Paris Lodge #94 and was its marshall nearly fifty years until his death. Arthur J. Hunt, 78, of South Paris (Maine's 1974 State Commander, S.U.V., and long-time Secretary-Treasurer of South Paris' Chamberlain Camp #69, S.U.V.) remembers he "filled the chair for 'Uncle Charlie' most Masonic meetings that last five years."<sup>10</sup>

George joined Hebron Grange No. 43 in 1875 and was its Master twenty years, serving in all offices several times. In 1875 he also joined Oxford Pomona and eventually the State Grange. For several years in the 1890's he was Secretary and Treasurer of the Patrons of Husbandry Mutual Fire Insurance Company. By 1936 he was reputedly the oldest Granger in the nation. He belonged to the Three-Quarter Century Club some thirty years. In 1935 he was made an honorary scout in the Boy Scouts of America; in 1937, an honorary member of the Auburn Lions Club. He was also an honorary member of the Joshua L. Chamberlain Camp 69, S.U.V.

A charter comrade of W. K. Kimball Post 148, G.A.R., Cmdr. George became its lone survivor. He attended reunions of the 16th Maine Infantry Association until these ceased. Badges kept today by his grandson Giles in Oxford, Maine, reveal that he attended the 1890 and 1904 National Encampments in Boston, the 1892 in Washington, D.C., and that he was at one time Maine Department Chaplain. From 1900 to the late 1930's he seldom missed a Maine encampment. Recognized by the mid-1930's as the Pine Tree State's oldest Civil War veteran, Comrade George was designated "Dean of the Maine G.A.R." Once asked how long he expected to live, he modestly replied, "I have no interest in the matter. I outlived my usefulness when I hit seventy-five."

In an October 27, 1975 interview with his last child, Gertie M. George (1881 - 1976) at the Andrews Nursing Home in South Paris, the writer learned of her late reflections:

"Always lived with my folks . . .

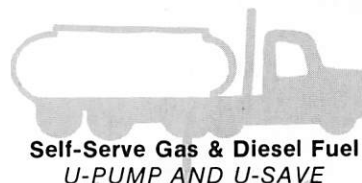
never married. When they got up in years we kept the Hebron place a-goin'. Mother was master fond of her laylock (lilac) and gardens about the house. I tried to keep 'em growin' beautiful—all sorts of flowers and vegetables. I canned a lot. Plain fare was what Papa liked. He never let up workin' . . . tinkerin' til most 95 or thereabouts. He went his way, feelin' pert (in fine health) most of the time. I went mine. Didn't need demandin' care. Could always get about. Days it was empin' (raining lightly) he'd go fishin', but not when it was teamin' (raining hard).

"As to the War, Papa never said what you'd say was a whole lot. Liked to mention seeing Mr. Lincoln to speak with twice. Yes'n the time he came to know Mr. Whitman who did him a favor by writing home to Mother about his pullin' through. He never shined up to (took a liking to) his verses, as they were so long-winded . . . just the war poems. These Papa allowed were great'n true. Papa liked radio. Had no use for Hitler or Mussolini, Papa didn't. He gener'ly got out to his social rinktums (parties or good times). Somebody always glad to give him a lift. The last of it we lived here in town. 'Course we missed the old place, but it was to be. Landsakes, I'll be joining him soon enough. It's been 35 years, you see."

On November 16, 1980, Giles M. George, 80, at his Fore Street Home in Oxford shared these details:

"I knew Grampa George a good 35 years. We—his son Arthur's family—lived about five miles away, at the foot of Greenwood Mt. I remember as a boy often splitting wood for him—work that's just not cut out for one arm. He had wood stoves for cooking and heating. No wood furnaces back then. We always went to his place Thanksgivings. Grammy had lovely flower gardens. Summers on rainy days when you couldn't hay, we'd go fishin' for pickerel or hornpout a mile or more down to Marshall Pond (Matthew Pond today). My older brother Harold (1897 - 1975) and I used to row the boat for Grampa—had the use of just his left arm. Pork rind was his bait. Had an old cob pipe and bamboo pole. Always caught plenty of 'em, too.

"Grampa never drove a car, but how he did like to get out and meet people. A friend, Earle Clifford, drove him around. Memorial Days he was



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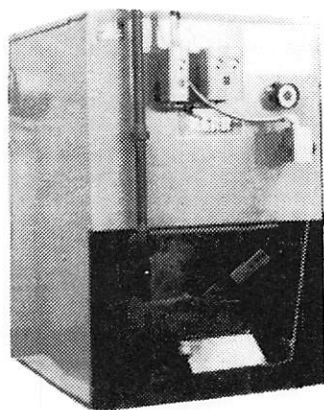
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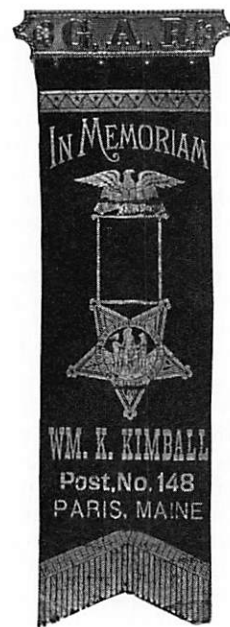
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in the Hebron parades. After he moved to South Paris about 1920, he was in those. I used to take him to Augusta for State G.A.R. Encampments. The last 20 years when only a handful of his comrades were left to go to meetings the first and third Tuesdays of the month, he was janitor of the hall—Kimball Post 148—upstairs over what used to be Howard's. Building's still there today, up over Prim's Pharmacy. Every early a.m., winters or cold days, he'd walk down to the hall and build up the fire . . . kept this up til the meetings ended in the mid-30's. Even after, he'd visit the empty room. Just a few days before he died he walked (a mile or so, figuring both ways) down to his old Kimball Post to have one last look at her, as if ter say 'Good-bye'."

The last Civil war men whom Cmdr. George knew were those living within a twenty-mile radius: Collins F. Morgan of Bethel, last survivor of the 20th Maine, who died at age 97 on Mar. 16, 1939; A. L. Bisbee of West Sumner and Co. H., 13th Maine, who died at 94 on Sept. 16, 1939; Frank A. Millett of Mechanic Falls and Co. I, 4th Maine, who died at 96 on June 2, 1940; Edsil G. Smith of Buckfield and Auburn, last survivor of the 14th Maine, who died at 94 on Feb. 21, 1943; and George H. Jones of Oxford, who died at 97 on August 19, 1946, one of Maine's last three Civil War men.

Charles H. George, at 105 years, 9 months, and 25 days, was given a Masonic funeral at First Congregational Church in South Paris. Among the grief-stricken present that day were Department Commander George H. Jones and Grace Nason Darling, Secretary to the Maine G.A.R. Draped over the church piano was the flag of the 16th Maine Infantry Association, a banner handed along from veteran down to veteran as they had died off—always with the trust that it would be buried with the last survivor. And so it was. Comrade George had kept it clean, had aired it out some on sunny days, had treasured it himself for who can say just how long? Buried at Hebron Village Cemetery, he left many descendants—three children, three grandchildren, eleven great-grandchildren. Thus perished the 16th Maine and the eldest of the Pine Tree State Boys in Blue.



"Uncle Charlie"  
George's Mourning Ribbon—  
undoubtedly  
worn "a good  
many a time"

Jay Hoar is an Associate Professor in English at the University of Maine, Farmington. He is presently involved in a collective biography about the last of the Civil War veterans, North and South, titled **Sunset and Dusk of the Blue and the Gray**.

<sup>1</sup>Theodore Gerrish and John S. Hutchinson, *Blue and Gray*, Portland, Maine, 1883, pp. 192-212.

<sup>2</sup>Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, New York, 1959, pp. 591, 911.

<sup>3</sup>Jay S. Hoar, *New England's Last Civil War Veterans*, Arlington, Texas, 1976, p. 133.

<sup>4</sup>Whitman, stipulating that he should have no pay, drew ordinary army rations, having obtained the sanction of Lincoln for this work of charity through the intervention of Emerson . . . Whitman joined the army just after the Battle of Fredericksburg, in which his brother, Lt. Col. George Whitman of the 51st New York Veterans, had been hit in the face by a piece of shell." pp. 11-12 of James Thomson's *Walt Whitman: The Man and The Poet*, London, 1910.

<sup>5</sup>*Biographical Review of Leading Citizens of Franklin and Oxford Counties, Maine*, Boston, 1897, pp. 109-110.

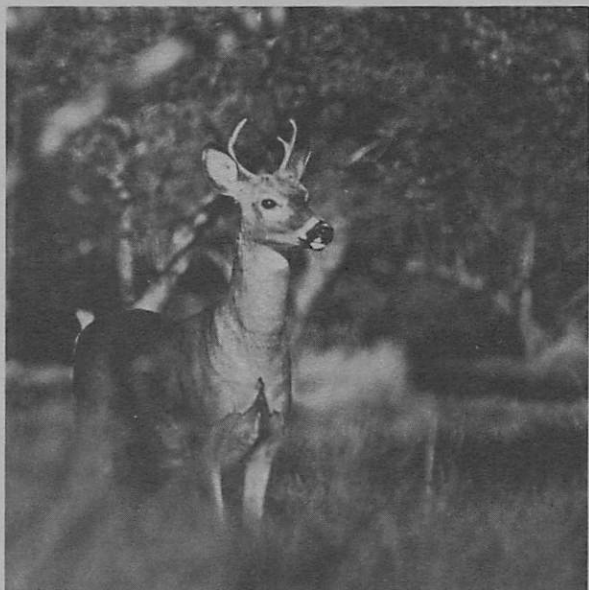
<sup>6</sup>*Massachusetts Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in the Civil War*, Vol. I, Norwood, Mass., 1931, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup>Major Abner R. Small, *The Sixteenth Maine Regiment in the War of the Rebellion*, Portland, Maine, 1886, pp. 272-273.

<sup>8</sup>Dyer's *Compendium*, p. 1225.

<sup>9</sup>*Daily Kennebec Journal*, Augusta, Maine, June 29, 1940, pp. 1, 5.

<sup>10</sup>The writer's interview with Arthur J. Hunt in South Paris on Dec. 6, 1980.



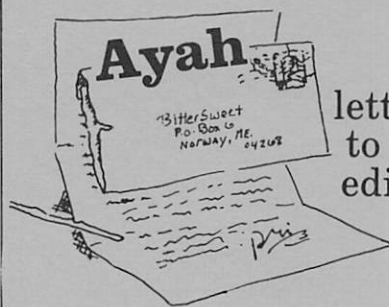
*"I saw old Autumn  
in the misty morn  
Stand shadowless  
like silence."*

*—Thomas Hood*



*Photos by  
Scott Perry*





We welcome letters and print what space allows.

## THE ANSWER TO THE GREAT CHOCOLATE DOUGHNUT QUESTION

We enjoy the *BitterSweet* very much. It helps to read about Maine when homesickness sets in. My husband and I have been away for four and a half years while he has been in the Air Force. And we're coming home to Oxford soon!

What prompted me to write to you was Laurie Knightly's letter from California. We also have been unable to find *real* chocolate doughnuts, so here is my grandmother's recipe:

3-3/4 cups Flour 2 Tbsp. Shortening  
6 Tbsp. Cocoa 1 cup Sugar  
4 tsp. Baking Powder 2 Eggs or  
1 tsp. Salt 4 Egg Yolks  
1/2 tsp. Cinnamon 1 cup Milk  
1 tsp. Vanilla

Sift flour, measure; add baking powder, cocoa, salt, and cinnamon. Cream shortening; add sugar gradually; continue beating until light & fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating after each addition. Add milk & flour mixture alternately, stirring until blended.

Roll out on lightly floured board about one-half inch thick; cut with floured doughnut cutter and let stand uncovered for 20 minutes. Drop into deep fat (365°-275°) and fry 3-5 minutes, turning the doughnuts as they rise to the surface; drain on absorbent paper.

Barbara Keene  
Merced, California

The enclosed recipe of Mrs. Eleanor Rollins (now deceased) makes a fine "ummy" chocolate doughnut. She lived across the street from me in South Paris and was the wife of Bill

Rollins, the principal of South Paris High School.

1 Egg 1 Tbsp. heaping Shortening  
1/2 cup Sugar 2 cups Flour  
1/2 tsp. Salt 2 tsp. Baking Powder  
1/4 tsp. Nutmeg 2/3 cup Milk  
1/4 tsp. Cinnamon 1/2 tsp. Vanilla  
1-1/2 squares Chocolate or 2 Tb. Cocoa  
Flour and roll out to one-half inch and fry as usual.

Marguerite Shaw  
Bronxville, New York

In the September issue of *BitterSweet*, Laurie Knightly of Berkeley, California, wanted a recipe for chocolate doughnuts. . . I want you to know how much our family enjoys your magazine.

2 Eggs 1-1/2 cups Sugar  
1/4 cup Cocoa 1 tsp. Vanilla  
4 tsp. Melted Shortening  
1-1/2 cup Sour Milk 1-1/2 tsp. Soda  
1 tsp. Ginger 1 tsp. Cinnamon  
1 tsp. Salt

Add enough flour to roll out (about 4-1/2 cups). Chill in refrigerator overnight. Fry as needed, 375°. Drain and sugar or frost.

They have never soaked up fat and really are good.

Thelma Stearns  
Bryant Pond

## THANKS

Thank you for your fine reproduction of my article about Mr. Jesse L. Rowe, "The Old Country Schoolmaster," in your September issue of *BitterSweet*. Many of Mr. Rowe's former pupils will be interested in that issue. Enclosed is my check for a one-year subscription to *BitterSweet*.

Hubert W. Clemons  
Hiram

We just wanted to thank you for your delightful story on The Jones Gallery. Needless to say, *BitterSweet* reaches a section of Maine most heavily which is untouched by other publications. At least one person a week will say that despite the fact they live in Bridgton or other nearby spot, they have never heard of The Jones Gallery. . .

Good luck to *BitterSweet*.

Bill Baker  
The Jones Gallery  
Sebago

I was very interested to see all the recent selections by schoolchildren. It must be very gratifying to them and their teachers to see them in print. I remember how I loved to get my own students' work printed. And, of course, I always enjoy George Allen's articles. He is very articulate and knowledgeable; I worked with him for a while at the Moses Mason House and am now curator of the Woodstock Historical Society.

Larry Billings  
Bryant Pond

**Ed. Note:** Mr. Billings is in the process of completing a book of poems on the subjects of favorite novels:

## PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

The sovereign Queen of elegance,  
She lets her people talk  
Of manners and of mores,  
Of place and love and wealth,  
And all the while the laughter  
Echoes back at them,  
The figures of a gentle world,  
Her heroes, her foes, her kin—  
The hero and the heroine—  
Misanthrope both I fear—  
See the pompous vicar,  
The villainous scapegrace,  
The scheming, haughty dowager,  
The daughters giving chase  
As they draw together,  
For he sees in her  
A paragon of sense and right  
The other world abjures,  
And somehow the stark tragedy  
Always still is this:  
Austen held the world at bay,  
Her lone and only bliss.

## WUTHERING HEIGHTS

Small and so complex the world—  
Mirrors to look in,  
One house Dionysian,  
The rest Apollo's kin,  
A narrator intelligent  
But blinder than a bat,  
Another simple, garrulous  
Who gives us all the facts.  
The generations grapple—  
The latter seem effete—  
'Til Heathcliff spies the  
Mirror of his nascent love,  
Tamer now but lasting,  
And he plummets from above,  
Like Milton's conquered Satan,  
Byron's reft Don Juan,  
The last gasp of the Gothic,  
Its crown, its cross, the thorn.

# ESPECIALLY NOW: The Need For Blood

*Every year at holiday time there is a crucial need for blood in our community hospitals. Fern Wells of Otisfield takes a look at that demand.*



"... Periods of drop-off; people pre-occupied with other things; the need to refresh their memories. They respond. Donors are magnificent,"

Director of Red Cross Blood Services Program Alfred P. Ricci of South Paris responds to my question: "Why are there crucial months in the blood-donor calendar?"

Portland-based, Ricci is responsible for Red Cross collection and distribution of all blood and blood products to Maine hospitals from Augusta south. A Bangor-based director is responsible for the program from Waterville north.

(Only one hospital in Maine, Stephens Memorial, is not in the Red Cross program, according to Ricci. The Norway hospital has a walk-in blood bank of their own.)

"They do call for certain products," the Red Cross official says when asked about the relationship with Stephens Memorial Hospital. "We distribute specialty products when asked for them."

Ricci speaks of Labor Day weekend 1981 as "... one of the worst declines in collections." He notes the lowest ebbs: "Memorial Day—difficult; July Fourth; Labor Day, and Christmas holiday time."

With the holiday season at hand, blood donors are needed. The following is a roundabout reminder of the need to call Red Cross Blood Services (1-800-482-0740), or Stephens Memorial Hospital (743-5933).

Fortune, according to an old Persian proverb, is fascinated with the efficient. Like Damsel Destiny, mortal man has also ever been fascinated. Blood, the liquor of physical life, certainly holds the highest efficiency rating of all life's essences.

Man's fascination with blood dates back time out of hand. Ancient Egyptians used the mysterious fluid as baths to make the sick well and the old young.

Roman scholars Pliny the Elder and Celsus describe, "... spectators rushing into the arena to drink the blood of dying gladiators." They believed strength and bravery were to be gained from the blood of the fallen fighters.

Pope Innocent XIII was given to drink the blood of three young boys in the hope that his strength and vitality would be returned.

Not only was human blood believed to bring health, virility, youth, bravery; the same was thought of nonhuman blood and man-made liquids. Louis the XIV's physicians transfused lamb's blood to the king in an effort to stem luetic (syphilitic) madness. Other animals thought to be acceptable donors were sheep, goats, horses—even dogs. Early Egyptian, Greek, and Roman civilizations tried such replacements as ale and wine.

Middle Ages Man believed the body needed to be emptied of some of its old blood before it could accommodate new. There exists a textbook sketch of a patient receiving a dog's blood taken from the animal's throat and drawn into the man's left arm through a pipe-like contraption. Meanwhile, human blood spurts and arches from a hole drilled in the bend of the man's right elbow.

Modern Man, until relatively recent past, credited blood myths dating back beyond memory. As late as George Washington's time, blood-letting was felt to be a way of curing many illnesses. Actually, as a matter of fact, bloodletting was without

doubt harmful for the debilitated individual—fatal for some!

On balance is an almost benign belief held forth well into this century: that drinking sassafras tea in early springtime beneficially thins one's blood. (I wonder if the lady who boiled and served the brew to me and her other daughter believed the idea of bloodthinning being helpful stemmed from the notion that bloodletting was good? Must pose the question some time. She'll probably just smile.)

While I still enjoy sassafras tea, I could never say the same for sulphur and molasses. I can now laugh, though, with Stephens Memorial Hospital Supervisor of Clinical Laboratory, Marjorie L. Stone. Her memory of the terrible sulfur ritual is a mirror of mine.

"My mother gave it to me. Supposed to purify blood," Technologist Stone remembers. More shared laughter and Stone adds, "We don't teach this now."

H. S. Sodhi, M.D., Director of the Norway hospital's Clinical Laboratory, seems to share our amusement about our family experiences with sulphur "cleansing the blood." Dr. Sodhi counters with, "Sulphur is not absorbed by the body." As for molasses, he speaks of the sugar factor, and I'm more convinced that sulphur dosing was never a healthful practice.

In addition to the influence of blood mythology on the practice of medicine through the centuries, the influence of blood images on the color of language is centuries-old. Here, the mysterious fascinator influences on wider and more permanent planes. Levels influenced include (but are not limited to) religion, history,

literature, sociology.

A dictionary scan immediately brings to mind a spate of denotations and connotations concerning the scarlet elixir. We look at "blood brother" with an entirely different emotion than at "bloodbath."

And we see, hear, and feel wide emotional differences in our own and others' use of the word b-l-o-o-d. Some of the uses are: blooded, blood-curdling, blood group, bloodguilt, bloodline, blood money, blood red, blood stain, bloodstone, bloodshot, bloody right, bloody shirt, Bloody Mary, and bloodthirsty. Each use of the five-letter word paints an entirely different picture story.

(Bloodhound was deliberately bypassed because I wish to tell why this dog is so named. It is not because the animal is bloodthirsty and therefore can easily track down fugitives. Rather, bloodhound is so called because it was the first breed of dog to have a pedigree; the first to be purebred, to come from blooded stock.)

From a look at language, we glance at literature, the arts, and history. All

are hand-in-hand in utilizing the word.

Example, Shakespeare's "The suns are cast with blood; fair day, adieu!" Another instance, the Bard's call for courage in *Henry III* when he calls, "Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood."

History records Sir Winston Spencer Churchill's finest moment: On 13 May, 1940, Churchill's first statement as Prime Minister, House of Commons—the immortal, "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat."

Looking to future histories, George Smith Patton warns in *War As I Knew It*: "A pint of sweat will save a gallon of blood."

Glancing last at sociology, I once heard a minority group member and leader ask a large and hostile gathering a question Shakespeare poses in *The Merchant of Venice*—the ever poignant question of Shylock, "If you prick us, do we not bleed?"

Man, even as Fortune, continues to be fascinated with the efficient. Further—perhaps more important—he is mystified, because man with all

his medical know-how has been unable to find a substitute for life-giving blood. Granted, artificial blood is being tested; some say it is to be approved in four or five years.

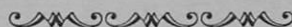
"Then said I, Lord, how long?"

Until then, need knows no century. For now, only you and I can give the gift of life for our fellow beings. There is a real need for you to donate blood. Especially now.

*Wells, a writer and broadcast journalist for many years in other parts of the United States, has been listed in Who's Who for American Women in Journalism. She lives now in Otisfield.*

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*\*Isaiah 6:11. (Christianity, Judaism, and Mohammedanism draw from or rest upon the knowledge of God as found in Isaiah—one of the longest and most important books of the Old Testament.*



## BOUND

Bound by clock numbers  
I circle morning hours  
On the prow  
for a quiet cave  
where I can roar  
or suspend life  
in hieroglyphics.

JoAnne Zywna Kerr  
Weld

## AUNT THEO

Theo is beautiful, a crimson  
Flower in a field, rising through  
The grass: emanating ruddy hue  
With weedy strength and vigor.  
Hardy resin  
Primes her pulse and gives her heart  
a reason  
For pumping proudly on.  
At eighty-two  
The sun still shines; the wrinkled  
rays are few  
But deep and number well each long  
year's lesson.  
The ample breasts still swing and  
sway and spill  
Into a t-shirt white, thinly worn  
And hung upon her shoulders strong.  
Her will  
Is ever ironclad; her spirit born  
Androgenous; her feet were made to fill  
The shoes of femininity unshorn.

Nancy Merrow  
Jay, Maine and  
Bloomington, Indiana

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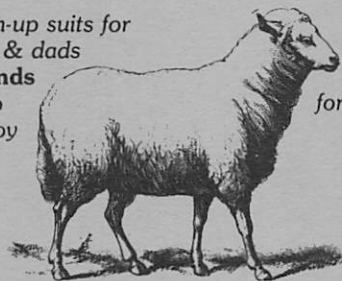
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Thanksgiving in the thirties was a combination of feasting and hunting in a lot of Oxford County towns.

The menfolk gathered before daylight to map out their strategy for the deer hunt. Those who had not been lucky enough to bag a deer to supplement the winter meat supply as the time neared for the end of the legal hunting period, were anxious to bring home some venison. Never mind if it wasn't trophy size, so long as it supplied some meat. Those who already had a deer were hoping the weather would stay cold enough so that the carcasses hanging in the

farther and farther apart until finally no more were to be found, it was considered reasonably safe to assume that the wound had been superficial. If, however, the blood signs increased in size, quantity, and spacing, the hunt for the stricken animal was continued.

If the deer had not been found by dark, most hunters would retrace their steps the next morning and often the animal would be found.

A hot trail or a missed shot at a fleeting deer were other reasons a hunter might not leave the woods for a particular dinner hour.

brought by those who would stay for dinner. In many homes, particularly on farms, chicken rather than turkey was the highlight of the meal. Often this was because there were spare chickens, hens, or roosters in the henhouse and little spare change in the pocketbook. Vegetables were likely to consist of produce from the summer gardens. Staple vegetables were potatoes, turnip, squash, and onions.

While city folk might settle for margarine and milk in the preparation of the vegetables, gravies, and other cooking, farm folk

## THANKSGIVING & VENISON

barn or shed would not spoil. The wives prayed that the weather would stay crisp so they would not have to start canning the venison and mince meat in Mason jars until after the Thanksgiving company had come and gone.

If the deer hunters were really lucky, a light fresh snow might cover the ground to facilitate tracking the game.

The time of the Thanksgiving dinner was built around the hunters. The early morning hours and those preceding dusk were considered prime hunting time. Other circumstances could, however, ruin the best laid plans for a specific meal time. A deer might be shot and wounded, but not fatally. In those days of "waste not, want not," it was considered a waste not to find such an animal. The hunters also wanted no part of having an injured animal suffering in the woods. There were no two ways about it—the meat was to be used for food and either the deer would be downed or get away under his own power to live another day.

Tracking a wounded deer was easier if there had been a snowfall. The bright red drops of blood left a tale that told its own story. A woodwise hunter could usually tell, from the amount of blood that was found and the distance between the tell-tale spots, somewhere near the part of the body in which the deer had been hit, and how badly hit it was. It was more difficult to follow the trail on dry autumn leaves, moss, or pine and fir needles. If the signs became

Poaching, or the illegal taking of game out of season, was frowned upon even in those depression days. Everyone preferred to get their deer legally. It was not unusual, though, for the head of a hungry family to take his venison when and where he could, outside the hunting season. The majority of hunting then was for food rather than sport. Game wardens did the best they could, but in sparsely settled areas a hunter could down a deer, clean it out, cover the remains, and transport the edible portions to his home without worrying too much about being observed.

While the hunters were engrossed in their activities, the home was abustle with preparations for the usual Thanksgiving dinner. Aunts, cousins, and all other degrees of relatives visited while they worked. Much had been done in the days before and additional treats were

laced theirs heavily with fresh homemade butter and cream almost thick enough to be taken from the cream can with a spoon.

Somebody's special pickles—some sweet and some sour—abounded. Also, jellies and preserves were interlarded on the table. Pies lined the sideboard. Bubbles of golden brown surfaced the custard pie; the apple slices pushed high their crusts made shiny and flaky by brushed-on egg white; the squash and pumpkin pies showed speckles of spices through their delectable slices; and the mince pies leaked sweet brown droplets through their coverings. Yeast rolls in clover-leaf and Parker House styles added their fragrance to the other good food perfumes in the house. Grapes, celery, and mixed nuts were a traditional part of the dinner, a special treat had only on the holidays.

The table was elegantly set. The



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good white tablecloths and silver and the best dishes, all usually brought forth only for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners, were set out freshly-washed, pressed, shined, and polished. Tables were pushed together to accommodate the bigger dinner crowd and the snowy tablecloths were spread over the everyday oilcloth table coverings. The young folk learned the niceties of table setting, placing the knives, forks, spoons, and napkins on the proper sides of the dinner plates. The oldsters offered vocal assistance and advice. Treasured china was handled carefully so that no chips or scratches would mar future holiday dinners, but in the hustle and bustle, occasionally a special dish would be broken.

When the hunters arrived, be it early, late, or right on time, the vegetables were bubbling and simmering on the cook stove and the table was ready.

Red hunting jackets were shed, tingling hands and noses were rubbed to bring back warmth and heavy boots might be retired to a convenient corner. If a deer, or possibly several, had been brought home, everyone talked (at once, it seemed) about the day's hunt. If there were no results from the day's effort, the hunters had many a tale of deer tracked, seen, or missed—the latter often being blamed on a faulty gun sight, gloves or mittens still on hands, someone in the line of fire, or any one of many other reasons.

While the often-excited conversation was going on, the cooks were mashing potatoes, squash and turnip; draining onions; filling water tumblers; making gravy; whisking rolls into the oven when the chicken was taken out; threading their way back and forth through the crowded rooms from the food area to the table. Children milled around, either helping or getting in the way.

When the festive board was properly laden, the word was passed that dinner was ready. Each found a seat. Usually an assortment of odd-shaped and sized chairs had been gathered and placed around the table, a Sears or Montgomery Ward catalogue or other books and pillows serving as risers for the small fry. Grace was spoken by whomever had been chosen for this tradition. Following the silence occasioned by

the saying of grace and after the final "Amen" was pronounced, the babble of voices again filled the room.

Whoever served at the head of the table carved the chicken. Plates, bowls of food, and the gravy boat were passed around and each person indicated their preference for white meat, dark meat, or drumsticks.

The meal was long and leisurely, the pace slowing to the point that, when it was time for dessert, some preferred to wait a while. After the proper amount of relaxing time interspersed with comments on the good meal, the groaning and belly-rubbing by those who over-ate, and general visiting and gossiping, the group stirred into activity again. If the men had brought deer home, they went out to the barn to hang the animal from the rafters or other high place to ripen. The womenfolk cleared the table and tackled the mountain of dishes to be washed, scalded, and dried with cup towels and/or dish towels. In one particular home one year, the men joined in the act and the big round galvanized washtub was used for a dish pan, the dishes being rinsed in the copper wash boiler filled with steaming water.

Later came pickin' time. Whatever suited one's fancy for food was "picked at." Some had slivers of chicken, either by itself or in a sandwich. Others found it time for a second (or third) piece of pie, often covered with a mound of whipped cream. A few were satisfied with cracking loose some nut meats and munching on grapes, while some hardy souls filled a whole plate with a second meal of chicken, stuffing, vegetables, and other savory morsels.

The family dogs and cats kept a watchful eye and made themselves, as a general rule, quietly obvious. They were occasionally rewarded with a share of the Thanksgiving dinner.

Eventually, those who had to leave said their goodbyes and those staying for a visit readied for bed. If the night air was extra crisp, the fires were banked. Children were tucked in and when the last light was turned or blown out, silence settled over the house. The hunt was over, Thanksgiving was over, and Christmas lay ahead.

*Mrs. Parks writes at her home in Buckfield.*

## THE MIGHTY HUNTER

I like to be out on my way  
to give those deer surprises.  
I check that paper every day  
to see what time sunrise is.  
I've got the perfect field for deer  
so I just sneak on down-breeze.  
I know they're eating apples there  
in underneath those trees.  
I saw that one sneak off. Now where  
has he himself concealed?  
But when I try to peep in there  
the rest run off the field.  
I'm positive that grove was bare  
when I walked down that lane  
But how did all those tracks get there  
when I come back again?  
I've got to find one in those trees—  
it couldn't be that hard  
When someone just drives by and sees  
one standing in my yard.  
Last month when I was telling how  
I said, "They're everywhere."  
I wish I knew where they was now  
so I could save my face.  
I realize now it is that gift  
of gab that makes me bolder.  
I'd like to find one now—to lift  
the burden from my shoulder.  
I can't step on this noisy crust  
they hear me for a mile.  
I finally realize it's a must  
that I sit down a while.  
I know they won't just up and jump  
I'll be a long time here,  
So put that cushion on a stump  
as comfort to my rear.  
I finally say, "They're not around"  
and I get up to go  
When one jumps up with a bound.  
How he got there, I don't know.  
They see me half a mile away;  
They're gone. It never fails.

How come all those rabbits stay  
'til I step on their tails?  
Last summer, right in open sight  
out of a field of clover  
That doe walked out all free of fright  
and tried to look me over.  
I sat there with a loaded gun  
a woodchuck to deceive;  
I couldn't even make her run—  
She wanted me to leave.  
All I could think of was a cow,  
For words I was at a loss.  
If she'd come back and try it now,  
I'd show her who was boss.  
If this scene occurs again  
I know I've got good reason  
To hook the next one to a chain  
and save for hunting season.  
I can eliminate these blues  
It will be easy bagging  
And I'll get my picture in the news  
when I'm the first one tagging.  
Deer want to be here for a while  
so I'm sure they've got good reason  
To be so fast to change their style  
at the start of hunting season.  
I'm still not at a loss for hints  
There's one thing left to do.  
I can bring back a few wide prints  
and make some deer track stew.  
In October, words I was faking  
made me a mighty hunter.  
But now those words are only making  
a real bad groan and grunter  
When a woman and her 10-point buck  
Were in the *Advertiser*,  
I said, "This is my year for luck."  
I think I'll turn out wiser.

*Unsuccessful*

*Fred Dunn  
Norway*



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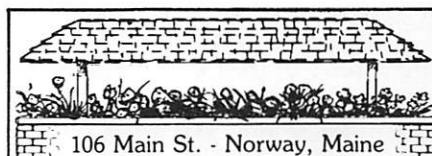
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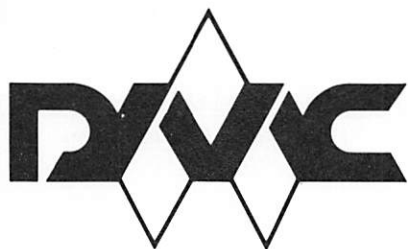
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# A DIAMOND

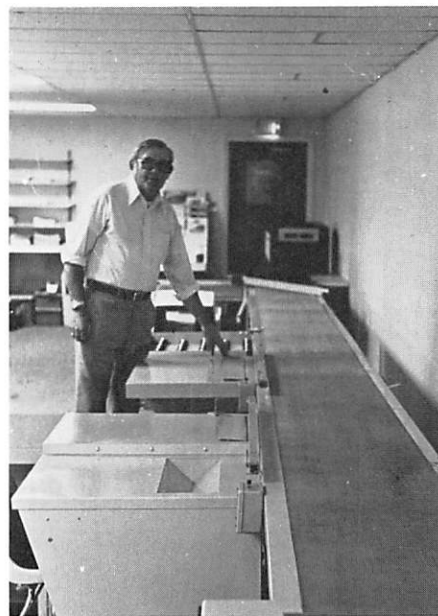
Like so many Franco-Americans of his generation, Robert Verreault left school early to go to work. He came from a family of twelve. He was the second child; my mother was the oldest. His father, my *pépère*, was a plumber with the Dulac and Sons Company.

He did not go into the mills as many did—the Hill, the Androscoggin, the Continental, the Bates, which then as now lined Lewiston's canals—but into the machine shop. Today he is president of Diamond Machine Company, a fabrication plant on Lewiston's River Road, which manufactures conveyor systems, stoves, plows, traction aids for international marketing. He employs 110 people and adds millions of dollars yearly into Lewiston's

generation, Franco-American or not, Bob was swept away by the Second World War. He served with the Sea Bees in the Pacific. This time proved valuable for him as a machinist since he was placed in charge of a machine shop and eventually led a maintenance crew on Iwo Jima Island.

In July, 1946, just two months out of the Navy, Bob Verreault, then 23, opened his first machine shop. It was on Bates Street in a 30x30 barn which, before the war, had been a blacksmith shop.

The building stood on posts and this posed a definite problem. The volume of business eventually caused the floors to sag and sent Bob looking for new quarters. In the early fifties, he moved to Blake Street to the former




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**Diamond Machine Company rebuilt after a disastrous 1972 fire. "And it wouldn't have been possible without Lewiston's business community. People were generous. They kept us going. This is a great place to do business in."**

---

economy.

"Some people have a talent for music or for sports. I have a talent for machines," he says of himself as we sit in his office, eating apples. We are spared the banging and clanging going on in the rest of the building by the interposition of several offices. It wasn't always this way, this being shielded from the tumult of an active machine shop which markets millions of dollars of inventory yearly. A hearing aid is set into his right ear.

Bob learned his trade before the war. At the Bergeron Machine Shop in Auburn, there was little money to pay him. "Pay me whatever you can," he remembers having told them. They hired the eager teenager and found a salary for him. From there, he went to the Woodworth Shop in Lewiston (*Notre Heritage* Park was created at the former shop site on Main Street next to the river.)

Like all young men of his

Valley Beachwater building.

Talking to him, one easily imagines the hard work, the long hours, the uncertain pay.

"I had a silent partner, Dick Couden. He was an angel who helped me out. He let me have money to keep the shop going when I needed help. He's dead now," he adds, speaking quietly for the memory of a man who was more than just a silent partner.

"In those days (the phrase jeeps coming back—'those days' were the days that formed and made Bob Verreault), the interest rate on loans was low. 3%, 3-1/2%. A good machinist earned 80¢ an hour and was willing to work right along with you. No vacation pay, no sick leave, no insurance. Nothing but 80¢ for every hour of work. Oh, those things came later. We have the whole thing now for our workers. They're important, but I don't know if I could have done it with all of that from the start."

He settles back fondly as he

reminisces. "In those days we did 'jobs.' Repairs on water pumps, elevators, car axles—you don't hear of axles breaking now because they make cars better than they used to—and appliances."

A break from jobbing came in the early fifties when Bob designed and produced an innovation for a Knapp Shoe Company machine. So pleased were the Knapp people with the innovation that it was talked up wherever company spokesmen went. Offers began trickling in for shoe-machine contracts.

One of the inquiries Bob received at this time was from the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. Spokesmen for the company approached him for help in redesigning and manufacturing a machine for synthetic soles. After examining existing Goodyear machinery, Bob went to his plant and, over the following weekend, created the wheeling machine (still a big seller twenty-five years later).

# IN LEWISTON

by Denis Ledoux



got into automated conveyor systems. First, for shoe plants, then garment, then furniture, then electronic. The conveyor system has been a big seller for us and still makes up the bulk of our sales. We also manufacture snow plows, traction aids, the Hearthmate stove."

Bob gets up, throws his apple core away and, standing before a picture of my grandfather (who "oddjobbed" at the machine shop after his retirement), Bob says, "I'm not too good at talking about myself. Perhaps I'd better send you downstairs to talk to them. They'll tell you."

I note his gray hair, his shuffling feet (a family trait). Here is a man who possesses confidence in everything but the verbal arena. I

have been possible without Lewiston's business community. People were generous. They kept us going. This is a great town to do business in."

Although Diamond was underinsured, the available insurance money permitted the company to rebuild a more spacious plant, one which would suit the growth which it would face in the seventies.

The plant now employs 110 who work over 3 shifts daily. Sales volume has doubled in the last five years with conveyor belts being the big seller. Because of its "job shop" background, calling for constant tailoring of jobs, Diamond Machine might just have the edge over the conveyor competition. Job shopping has given Diamond the background to adapt

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**He chuckles as he recalls what a Goodyear executive said to him after receiving the \$1,700 design fee for an invention: "Verreault," you probably think you're real smart. But... you didn't do anything we couldn't have done... with six years and \$3,000,000!"**

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Before submitting his machine plans, he waited a few weeks to ascertain the soundness of his idea. Convinced it was the best possible, he returned to Goodyear. The company presented him with a \$5,000 order, and then another, and then another. The wheeling machine sold around the world.

I begin to understand what he means when he says, "I have a talent for machines."

Bob chuckles as he recalls what a Goodyear executive told him after receiving the \$1,700 design fee: "Verreault, you probably think you're real smart. But, you're not so smart. You didn't do anything we couldn't have done... with six years and \$3,000,000!"

"I was lucky to be in the right place at the right time. Goodyear opened all kinds of doors for us. We expanded our shoe work. We got into the lumber industry contracts: fork lifts, sawmills, sawdust blowers. Then we

assure him that he is giving me all I need.

In 1955, growing sales necessitated a move away from the Blake Street shop to River Road. In the early and mid-50's, Diamond Machine had made the transition from repair to manufacture and its new, more spacious 40x100 plant was to reflect the needs of large-scale production.

In July, 1972, Diamond Machine burned to the ground. Fire had broken out, it is believed, in the plant's paint shop and destroyed the 1955 building and its many additions. Workers arrived that morning to the sight of a devastated plant.

"But we didn't stop the payroll. There was no loafing. Within a month, we had sent out \$80,000 worth of machinery."

Then he stops and looks at me and says, "Everyone was terrific. People lent us typewriters, tools, drafting equipment, and work space. We didn't lose a day of pay. And it wouldn't

every conveyor to the requirements of the purchasing company. Plant managers are understandably pleased with not having to alter their buildings to a conveyor's needs! Other conveyor producers tend to have standard models which too often they will not or cannot alter for different plants.

Production schedules deadlines until next March show contracts with companies across the United States as well as one in Ireland. These companies include Western Electric, IBM, and Xerox.

Says Bill Ledoux (my brother, chief engineer), "Tell your readers that companies like dealing with a Maine firm. They like feeling they can have work done on a handshake. Also, I think they like having an excuse to come up here." Bill has just returned from a Maine Road Safety Commission meeting where he has been plugging Diamond's snowplows. He and my uncle talk briefly

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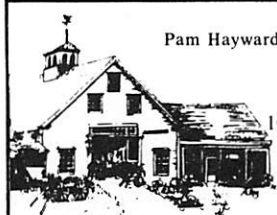
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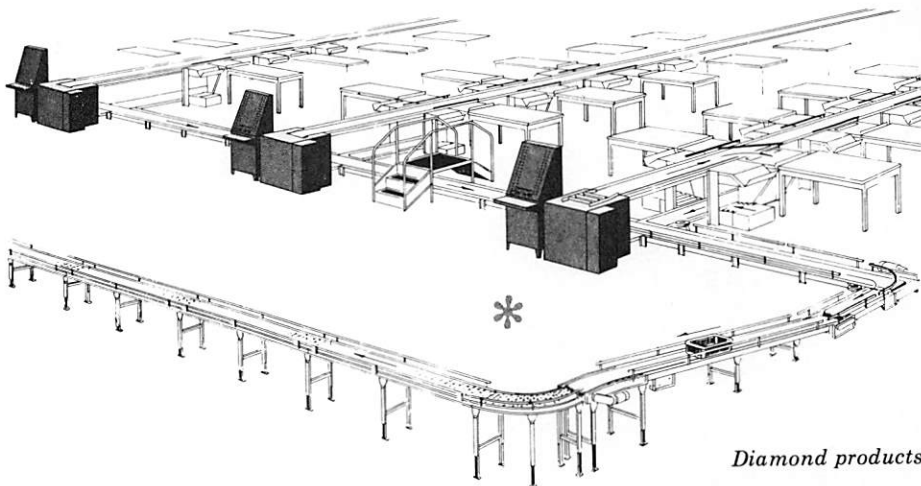
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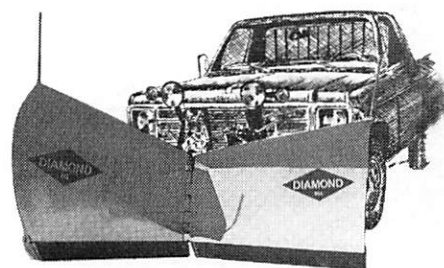
*Diamond products*

about the meeting. I look about me. In front of me is a closet bar, a refrigerator, a sink, louvered doors. As much as anything, this dramatizes the change from Bates Street jobbing days.

Bob Verreault has come a long way.

When asked the question which I always feel obliged to ask at the end of every interview, "What advice would you give young people starting out today?" Bob breaks out in a smile. He is a congenial man who has been one of his own best salesmen.

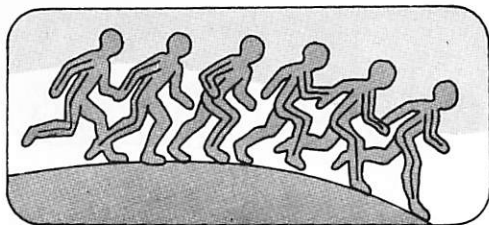
"Tell them I'd be scared as hell to start over. In those days, there weren't so many regulations. People were willing to work for you. I just jumped into it." He scratches his head. "Sometimes you do something because you don't know any better and you get lucky and succeed."



Driving away down River Road, beneath the highway overpass, dodging potholes, I think, "Lucky, yes, but you also need a gift." And I remember Bob saying, "Some people can play the guitar. Well, I can make machines."

*Ledoux is a free-lance writer in this part of the state.*





## UPDATE ON ARTHRITIS PART II

Imagine awakening each morning with painful stiffness in every joint. You are all but immobile. Normal household chores seem insurmountable. You have been told you have early rheumatoid arthritis. Your thoughts run to deformities, wheel chairs, nursing homes. And, with all this, your doctor has offered you aspirin! The audacity of it! He just doesn't understand. This is serious. You need more than aspirin.

Would any of us react differently? Disease is frightening—disease that persists more so. At this crucial point in the care of an arthritis patient, a well-meaning but uncommunicative doctor may lose his patient to quackery. In fact, aspirin, inexpensive and ever available, is the mainstay of arthritis therapy if used correctly. It should be the first drug offered to the arthritic.

Many forms of arthritis are diseases of inflammation of joints. The joints affected swell with white blood cells attacking some known (as in gout) or unknown (as in rheumatoid arthritis) substance. In the heat of battle, the white cells release poisons and toxins of their own. This inflammatory response to the foreign substance (bacteria, virus, uric acid crystal, antibodies) injures also the joint linings, cartilage, and bone—innocent onlookers to the conflict. Drugs which are anti-inflammatory will lessen the damage to bystanders. Aspirin is a great anti-inflammatory drug in proper doses.

Aspirin's only shortcoming is its price. How can anything that cheap be any good, we wonder. But, with large doses and high blood levels, aspirin works wonders. One needs eight to twelve tablets per day, possibly altered in doses by laboratory determination of blood levels of aspirin which are easily done. Inflammation usually subsides. The secret with arthritis, though, is to continue with treatment even when feeling better. Inflam-

# Medicine For The Hills

by

Michael A. Lacombe, M.D.

mation and joint damage are held at bay only as long as the drug is used. **There is no cure for rheumatoid arthritis.**

With these doses of aspirin, heartburn can be a problem. There are aspirin preparations coated with antacid (for example, Ecotrin and Ascriptin). They are as effective, though more expensive. Other common aspirin side effects are decreased hearing and ringing in the ears. Both remit with decreasing dosage.

Most proprietary non-prescription arthritis preparations contain aspirin (salicylates) as the active ingredient. Though no more effective than aspirin, they are certainly more costly. Commercial time on television does not come cheap. Those who feel that expensive is better will snatch up these attractively packaged items.

For those who cannot take aspirin, there are substitutes aplenty. The most commonly used aspirin substitute, acetaminophen (Tylenol, Tempra, Datril) is *not* anti-inflammatory and will not treat arthritis. Ibuprofen (Motrin), fenoprofen (Nalfon), and naproxine (Naprosyn) are similar to aspirin in anti-inflammatory properties and as effective. All are expensive. One thousand plain aspirin cost about \$9.00. At ten tablets per day, this will last over three months. A month's supply of Motrin costs about \$25.00. The added cost gives you an aspirin substitute, not necessarily better treatment. Sulindac (Clinoril), another aspirin substitute, need be taken only twice daily. It is expensive.

Indomethacin (Indocin), tolmetin (Tolectin), and phenylbutazone (Butazolidine) are more potent than the above, sometimes more effective in rheumatoid arthritis, and considerably more toxic. Long-term use requires close supervision by a doctor (thereby adding to their expense).

Certain organic gold salts, when injected, are anti-inflammatory.

They are quite effective against rheumatoid arthritis and in many cases control the disease quite well. Gold injections are given weekly at first, for 10-12 weeks, and then monthly, indefinitely. Response is slow, with benefit occurring over months, not overnight. Side effects, if not early recognized, can be lethal. Frequent blood and urine testing is mandatory. Treatment with gold is costly; the medicine itself is expensive and the frequent doctor's visits and lab testing push up the price. Still, seventy percent of rheumatoid patients respond favorably. A gold salt in pill form is being evaluated and may become available.

Plaquenil and penicillamine are two very potent drugs used to combat rheumatoid arthritis. Potential side effects are serious, so these drugs are never used in a cavalier manner. Cortisone preparations (prednisone, dexamethazone, Decadron, Delta-sone, others) suppress inflammation and relieve the suffering of rheumatoid arthritis in dramatic fashion. For arthritis sufferers, especially those with rheumatoid disease, cortisone is truly a miracle drug. The temptation is to use it often and much. A siren's song, really; unrestrained treatment with cortisone is worse than the disease. Cortisone weakens resistance to infection, causes easy bruising, acne, and fat deposits, produces severe mental reactions, high blood sugar, high blood pressure, and thinning of the bone. It may lead to cataracts, muscle weakness, and high cholesterol. Used judiciously, cortisone is a god-send. Indiscriminate use is a disaster.

Treating arthritis is tricky business. A cookbook approach seldom works. Usually, combinations of drugs are needed, together with physical therapy, exercises, rest, surgery, and emotional support. There is no cure for rheumatoid arthritis, but a doctor who cares, and who knows what he is doing, can help immensely. He need *not* be an arthritis specialist. He had better not be a quack. When you find a doctor you trust with treating your arthritis, stay with him. Don't shop around. Avoid needless expense, patent medicines, quacks, and gimmicks. Lose weight if you need to, to spare your joints. Help yourself.

# When The Ache Is Deepest

**H**arriet Knight wasn't a busybody by any stretch of the imagination, but she was the neighborly sort. To Harriet, being neighborly meant taking time from one's round of chores to bake a fresh apple pie for the family with a sick mother. It meant making an unscheduled trip to the village to do an errand for a more elderly neighbor. It also meant stepping in to fill a need while others were thinking about what to do.

Thus when Vernon Hodges came to an untimely end in an auto accident, Harriet was the first to call on his young widow. The Hodges with their four children had lived in the rent across the corner from Harriet for just three weeks. It was a graying frame structure, one in a row of many built near the river to house the mill workers of a generation ago. The closing of the mill brought a changed tenancy, and the jobs of the present occupants reflected the meager employment opportunities the area had to offer. Vernon Hodges had worked in the local shoe factory. Harriet had sent over a warm loaf of freshly baked bread for their first supper, but one of the youngsters had answered the door, and she had yet to meet the young mother.



Now was her opportunity. Without any delay, she dressed and went to call. A tall girl of about fourteen answered the door. "I'm Harriet Knight, your next-door neighbor, dear," Harriet said by way of introduction. "May I see your mother, please?"

The girl motioned her into the shade-drawn front parlor. Mrs. Hodges was sitting on a worn sofa, rocking back and forth and hugging a baby to her bosom. The baby whimpered and rubbed its face on her wrinkled housecoat. Two little boys collected in the doorway and peered curiously at Harriet.

"This is a terrible thing to have happen to you, dear, but I'm sure there's something I can do for you at a time like this. What is your first name?" and she bent toward Mrs. Hodges, putting her hand gently on her shoulder.

"Geraldine," whispered Mrs. Hodges in a toneless voice.

"Now, Geraldine, do you and your daughter have anything suitable to wear to the funeral?" Harriet had come over to be neighborly and she was not going to be denied the fulfillment of her mission.

"Noooo," said Geraldine.

"Well," said Harriet, "You get yourself dressed, bring your daughter—and the baby—and come over to my house. I live in the cottage on the opposite corner. My husband built it for me. He's been gone ten years now. It's a hard time, but we'll get you through it." She stood up a little straighter and smiled cheerily at the bewildered faces in the doorway, at the slender girl standing by her mother, and at Geraldine and the baby. "I have just the right dresses for you. There, now, everything will be all right." She turned and tiptoed out of the house, feeling the weight of its despondency despite her efforts at lightness.

Her heart ached for all who suffered, especially for those who suffered the loss of a loved one. Goodness, didn't she know what it was like! She and Clyde had been married forty years. When the time

came, she rose to the occasion as Geraldine would and as millions of others had, each in his or her own way.

Being neighborly was one of the ways Harriet filled the void left after Clyde's death. When the ache is deepest, do for someone else, her minister had advised her, but Harriet didn't wait for that deep ache.

Harriet entered the front door of her little cottage and glanced around at the familiar furnishings. They hadn't changed much since Clyde's death. His favorite chair was still by the front window with a freshly washed antimacassar on it. The choicest stones in his mineral collection reposed behind the glass doors of a mahogany china closet.

"Maybe it's a good thing they just moved into new quarters," thought Harriet. "The memories won't be as keen." But even as she thought it, she knew that familiar associations were only a small part of the battle with grief. She sighed. Then to dispel the gloom that she felt settling over her, she stepped briskly into the bedroom and opened the closet door. She pushed hangers to one side and reached for a navy blue dress and a brown one with a straight skirt and a top with white trim around the neck and sleeves.

"The brown one will do for the girl," she mused. "I can take a tuck here and there if need be and let down the hem. And the navy should fit Geraldine. It pays to save things." And she smiled smugly, pleased to find a use for the cast-off dresses which had hung so long in the back of her closet. She rummaged through her top dresser drawer and arranged some undergarments in a pile to one side. Then she checked her hat boxes and set two apart from the others.

"Bless her, I do hope she has a dress to wear out of the house. I haven't seen her outside since they moved in except in that old housecoat." Harriet looked out the front window toward the two-family house on the corner. The shades were still drawn and the front door closed. "Why, the poor child needs some encouragement."

## Fiction by T. Jewell Collins

She trotted across the street again and tapped gently on the door. It opened slowly and Geraldine was standing there, the baby still in her arms. She had on a faded dress with the belt missing. Behind her stood her daughters. The boys were nowhere to be seen.

"Come along, dear, I've found just the dress for you. And you, too." She reached for the girl's arm and gently steered her toward the door. Geraldine moved stiffly as if still not aware of the situation. Harriet remembered those first few days of disbelief. It was as if a dreadful mistake had been made, and soon someone would come along with the assurance that everything was really all right, the nothing had changed at all. But no one came except the sympathy givers, and the finality of Clyde's death had borne in on her until she felt she could endure it no longer. But she did endure, and Geraldine would, too.

Harriet led them across the street, onto her porch, and in through the front parlor. The girl looked around Harriet's neat little cottage, but Geraldine's eyes remained unseeing.

"Right in here," Harriet said, leading the way into her bedroom with its dotted swiss curtains, pink dressing table with a skirt of the same dotted swiss, and double bed filling one end of the room.

"Here, you take the baby." She lifted the child from Geraldine's arms and gave it to the girl. "Land sakes!" she exclaimed, "I don't believe I know your name . . . or the baby's!"

"Murlene," the girl whispered. "And he's Ty."

"Murlene, my what a pretty name, and for such a pretty girl, too."

Murlene blushed and busied herself with the baby.

Harriet laid out the undergarments and dress for Geraldine and discreetly ushered Murlene back into the parlor. "I'll show you my spoon collection while Mother is dressing," she said. "You sit down here in the rocker. The baby will like that." Harriet lifted from the rack the spoons she thought would most

interest Murlene and pointed out interesting details in each one. They became so engrossed in examining the spoons that neither one noticed Geraldine as she stepped shyly through the bedroom door.

She stood there for a minute before Harriet looked over. "My goodness, now doesn't your mother look right pretty!" She stepped over to Geraldine and turned her around to get the full effect of the fit of the dress. "Perfect, I'd say. What do you think?" and she turned to Murlene.

Murlene took in the whole of her mother from her straight pinned-back hair to her slippered feet. She put her face in the baby's shoulder and smiled approvingly.

"Shoes, that's the only thing lacking," Harriet said, "but you leave that to me, will you?" She looked straight at Geraldine, who shook her head mutely. "Your foot's a little bigger than mine, I'd judge. But that's no problem. All right, you take a good look at yourself in the mirror and then change, and we'll see what we have for Murlene."

Geraldine disappeared behind the bedroom door. When she returned, she took the baby, and Harriet motioned Murlene to the bedroom.

"Such lovely brown hair you have," Harriet said. "I'll bet you'll be a picture in this brown dress."

Murlene's eyes grew big as Harriet drew the brown dress with its white trim from the closet. "Let me help you, dear," said Harriet, unfastening Murlene's dress. "Perhaps I have a slip you can use, too. Let me see." She opened the top dresser drawer again and produced another slip and a pair of nylons and another garter belt. "Now won't that make you quite a young lady?" She smiled warmly at Murlene.

Harriet pulled the shiny white slip over Murlene's slim body. Then she showed her how to get into the garter belt and how to pull on the stockings without snagging them. "Now for the dress," she said breathlessly.

Murlene obediently put her arms in the air, and Harriet slipped the top on her. She fastened the hook in the

back, turned Murlene around, and held her at arm's length to get the effect. "I think that'll do nicely," she said. "What do you think? Now for the skirt."

Murlene gazed at herself in the mirror in wonder. "Your foot is about my size," said Harriet. "Try these on." Harriet slipped a pair of brown pumps on Murlene's nylon-covered feet. She stood uncertainly in them.

"You'll want to practice walking, so why don't you take them right along home with you. I want to take two tucks in the top and let the hem down a mite, and then you'll look just fine. Come in here, Geraldine, and see how your daughter looks, and you'll both need hats to wear to the church," she added in the same breath. Harriet was flushed with the large measure of success she was having in this effort to be neighborly. It truly exceeded her expectations, and the Hodges' response, or lack of response, put Harriet right in the driver's seat.

She pulled two hatboxes from the closet, still chattering. "I don't blame you for not having visiting hours. It's just too much with the children and all. You're so new in town, it would hardly be worth your while anyway. Not that people wouldn't come, but they'd be mostly people you didn't know, coming to do the proper thing."



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She placed a blue hat on Geraldine's straight hair and tipped it to one side. "With a little soft curl in your hair, you'll look lovely," she said encouragingly.

"Here, Murlene, try this one on." Murlene placed a tiny hat with a froth of veiling awkwardly on her head.

"I think a hat pin will do it," said Harriet, moving the hat forward and catching the veiling with a long pearl-headed pin. Mother and daughter looked at one another timidly. A faint light came into Geraldine's eyes as she looked at Murlene in the brown dress. She absently patted Ty on the back. Harriet put an arm around each and drew them to her. "You'll both do fine, just fine."

Then as if to break the solemnity of the moment, she said brightly, "I'll have those shoes for you this afternoon, Geraldine. Mind you, I won't forget. Now Murlene, let's get you back into your own clothes." Harriet bustled about, hanging up the skirt and top as soon as Murlene removed them and folding the undergarments. "I'll just keep them here until I get your outfit fixed," she offered.

As soon as they had left, Harriet rang up Mr. Fisher at the shoe store. "Now, Mr. Fisher," she started, "this is Harriet Knight. How often do you

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**Being neighborly was one of the ways Harriet filled the void left after Clyde's death. When the ache is deepest, do for someone else.**

---

have a chance to do a really good deed? Well, I'm bringing you that chance today. Young Vernon Hodges' wife needs a pair of blue shoes and you're the one that can supply them. They're for her to wear to Vernon's funeral and I don't think you want to say no. Her foot's a dite bigger than mine, probably a size 7. If I stop by this afternoon, could I bring a pair or two home for her to try? Poor dear's too grief stricken to shop . . . That's very kind of you, Mr. Fisher. I'll see you a little later."

At about four o'clock that afternoon, Harriet once more knocked at the Hodges' front door, this time with two shoe boxes under her arm. Murlene answered the door. "Here's the finishing touch, a pair of shoes for your mother. Is she here?"

Geraldine came to the door with the

baby in her arms. Harriet wondered if she ever put him down. "Let me take the baby, dear, while you try these on." The baby sank into her arms like a feather pillow. Harriet struggled to support his wobbly head as she moved toward the front parlor. She hadn't held many babies in her life. Her marriage with Clyde hadn't been so blessed.

"Here, pull on this nylon so you can get the full effect." She drew a nylon stocking from a plastic bag in her purse. Geraldine slipped her foot out of her slipper and into the stocking and shoe. The first shoe fit her, and she didn't even try on the second style.

"No, what plans have you made for the funeral, dear?" asked Harriet.

"The man came over . . . the man from the funeral parlor. Day after tomorrow," she said listlessly, "at 3:00 at the church."

"If there's anything else you need, you just send one of the children over. You hear? Murlene, you come over and help me bring the clothes back. I've fixed your outfit so it'll fit you better."

Geraldine removed the shoe and stocking and resumed possession of Ty. Harriet left with the nylon stocking and the shoes Geraldine didn't need, with Murlene trailing behind her.

"You and your mother and the boys will want to arrive at the church at quarter to three, Murlene," directed Harriet. "Now I'm trusting you to remember this and to see that the boys are washed and dressed in their school clothes. Your mother's in no condition to tend to such matters. A neighbor will come in to stay with the baby. You tell your mother that's all taken care of."

Murlene nodded, as she followed Harriet through the front door and into the bedroom again. Harriet placed the lingerie in a paper bag, put the dresses over Murlene's arm, and they each carried a hat box back to the Hodges'.

"I'll be over at two o'clock day after tomorrow to help you dress," she said to Geraldine. "In the meantime you get plenty of rest and take care of yourself, and don't think about supper. Murlene is coming back with me to help prepare it."

Harriet kept in close touch with the Hodges family during the next day and a half with her neighborliness

culminating in overseeing the dressing of the little family for the funeral.

The funeral itself was simple and unpretentious. Four of Vernon's race-track buddies were there, and a group from the shoe factory. Geraldine, Murlene, and the boys filed into the front seats. Harriet slipped into the back row. The closed coffin had three sprays of flowers arranged on it, the largest one in the center.

The minister read about there being many mansions in the Father's house and about Jesus being the resurrection and the life. The old organ wheezed out, "Abide With Me." When it was all over, Geraldine and Murlene, and the boys were the first to leave. Geraldine's face was expressionless and Murlene walked too close to her mother's heels, still a little uncertain in her brown pumps.

Harriet was ready with a reassuring smile when Geraldine drew near her pew. She caught the young widow's eyes, still dry from disbelief. Geraldine looked at Harriet for a moment. She stopped. Murlene kept walking and pushed into her mother.

"Oh, Mrs. Knight," Geraldine moaned, and the next moment she was on her knees with her face in Harriet's lap, sobbing great sobs. The organ wheezed on through "Abide With Me" and the church emptied.

The coffin was carried out and placed in the funeral car, but it would be a while before the funeral procession got under way. Vernon Hodges' widow was crying, and Harriet Knight was encouraging her.

Harriet tucked her scented lace hankie into Geraldine's hand. "It's all right, child," she said soothingly, "Everything's going to be all right."

"Flowers," murmured Geraldine. "I forgot to send them, but, but . . . the big bouquet was from . . . us. Did you . . . ?" and she turned her pale moist face up to Harriet's.

Harriet's eyes had a far-away look as she absently patted Geraldine's thin shoulder. She was remembering her anguish at forgetting to send a spray of flowers to Clyde's funeral. She had vowed then and there to watch for an opportunity to set her conscience to rights, and this occasion, ten years later, had provided it.

"Yes, dear," Harriet replied.

"Oh, Mrs. Knight, how can we ever

thank you?" said Geraldine, sobbing afresh into the lace hankie.

"You have, my dear, you have," said Harriet, "more than you'll ever know. Come now, they're waiting for you."

Harriet grasped Geraldine firmly by the shoulders, and Geraldine responded by standing up. Her hat was askew and Harriet gently straightened it for her.

"Oh, Mrs. Knight, ride with us, please," sobbed Geraldine.

"Nothing would please me more," replied Harriet, patting the front of her dress and adjusting her own hat. To have Geraldine actually make a request of her touched Harriet deeply. The two women stepped from the church and into the waiting funeral car.

The little procession inched slowly forward, the boys sitting on jump seats and behind them Harriet, firmly ensconced between Murlene and Geraldine.

*Mrs. Collins is a part-time resident of North Waterford and a frequent contributor to BitterSweet.*

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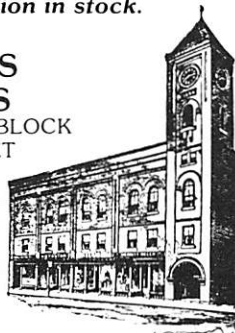
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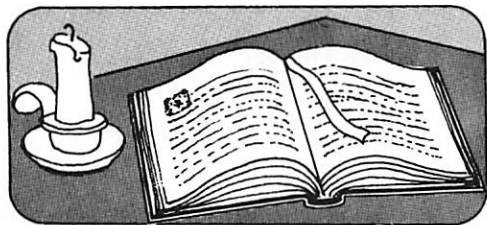


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## Off The Shelf

by Wini Drag

### **The Country of the Pointed Firs and Other Stories**

Sarah Orne Jewett  
(Doubleday Anchor Books, 295 ppg.  
originally published, 1896)

### **A Country Doctor**

Sarah Orne Jewett  
(originally published 1884,  
still in print).

I must confess to a bad habit—while reading a book to review, I try to find and read everything by or about the author. Needless to say, it can absorb a lot of time, but it's fascinating. (I'm still searching for old *Ford Times* magazines that include stories by Edmund Ware Smith, whose books were reviewed in this column earlier this year.)

Finding stories by and information on Sarah Orne Jewett wasn't difficult—in fact, I couldn't read all I located, and the collection was far from complete.

Miss Jewett, who was born in South Berwick, Maine in 1909, is very readable, and many of her approximately 150 short stories and novels are still being published.

Willa Cather, whose novels depicted the early life in the midwest, was a young friend of Jewett. She ranked *Country of the Pointed Firs* with Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* and Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*: "I can think of no others that confront time and change so serenely," she wrote. "It (*Country of the Pointed Firs*) is so tightly, yet so lightly built, so little encumbered with heavy materialism that deteriorates and grows old-fashioned."

*The Country of the Pointed Firs* was Jewett's "chef-d'oeuvre" according to most sources. The main reason is because of the author's ability to paint the people and scenes of New England, colorfully yet muted, realistically yet philosophically.

It is difficult with any author's works to say what is or is not autobiographical, but some of the incidents in this story were true of

Jewett. For example, she spent a summer in a place like Dunnet Landing and rented a schoolhouse in order to write undisturbed.

The people in the land of tall, dark trees near the sea move from episode to episode in a somewhat unified collection of sketches that is more loosely knit than a traditional novel.

Her characters, nearly always older women of strong and indomitable spirit, present a cameo shot of rural New England life in the late nineteenth century.

She records and laments the loss of a way of life that was disappearing even as she wrote about it. To her, the country was good and the city represented evil. Women were strong and men were either dead, gone, or weak.

Other stories in this collection vary in appeal. "The Dulham Ladies," which appears to be a parody of an English novel, attacks the high pretensions of social standings.

"The Flight of Betsy Lane," cloaked in the trappings of a dated period in history when poor farms were part of village life, is more a character study of a determined 69-year old woman. Yet it comes through as a delightful tale.

The strength of Jewett's short stories lies in the razor-sharp detail of her characters and landscapes. Each word appears hand-picked and significant to the total picture. Her humor is subtle and so understated that it often escapes the casual reader. Much of the probing of characters comes through in conversation.

Miss Jewett, whose first story was published when she was nineteen under the pseudonym of Alice Elliot, is considered the best regional writer of the 19th century because of her portrayal of "local color."

While 80% of the fiction was written by women at that time, Jewett's stories were more refined and artistic than the sentimental pieces so prevalent then. She recorded the local speech and simple daily tasks of a

particular time in a way that made it timeless.

Her first book of collected stories, *Deephaven*, was published in 1877 and brought her the attention of the literary world. And in 1901, she was given a Doctor of Letters degree from Bowdoin College, her father's alma mater, for *The Tory Lover*. However, it is in *The Country of the Pointed Firs* and *The Country Doctor* that she captured best the land and the people she knew and loved.

*The Country Doctor* portrays the learned and kindly leader of a village and is obviously a tribute to her father.

As a young girl, Jewett traveled around the countryside with her father as he tended the sick and elderly. In this novel, young Nan spends many happy afternoons riding in the carriage with the country doctor who is her guardian.

The plot moves slowly and carefully. What makes it appealing today is in the attitudes and reactions



toward women and careers. Jewett's own lifestyle, perhaps unique in her day but commonplace today, may be coming through as she leads the tormented Nan in her decision about love, marriage, and a life work.

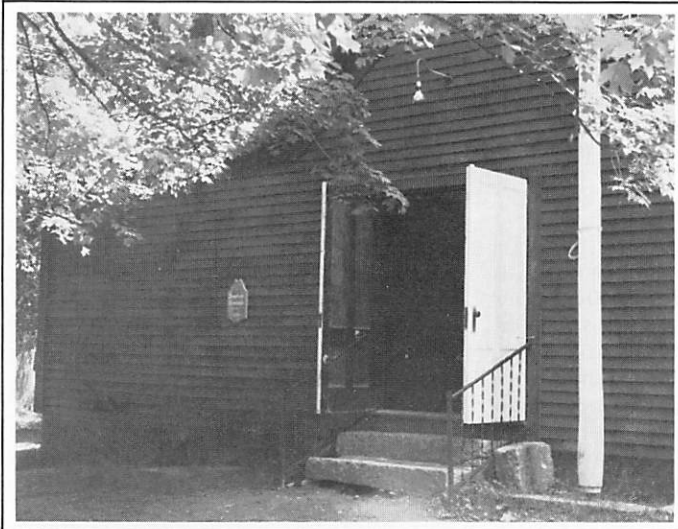
One passage in the book especially struck me in its insight. Quoting the world-travelling friend of the country doctor: "And yet people talk about the prosaic New England life . . . for intense, self-centered, smoldering volcanoes of humanity, New England cannot be matched the world over."

New editions of these two books and others by Sarah Orne Jewett can be bought at bookstores and originals abound in area libraries.

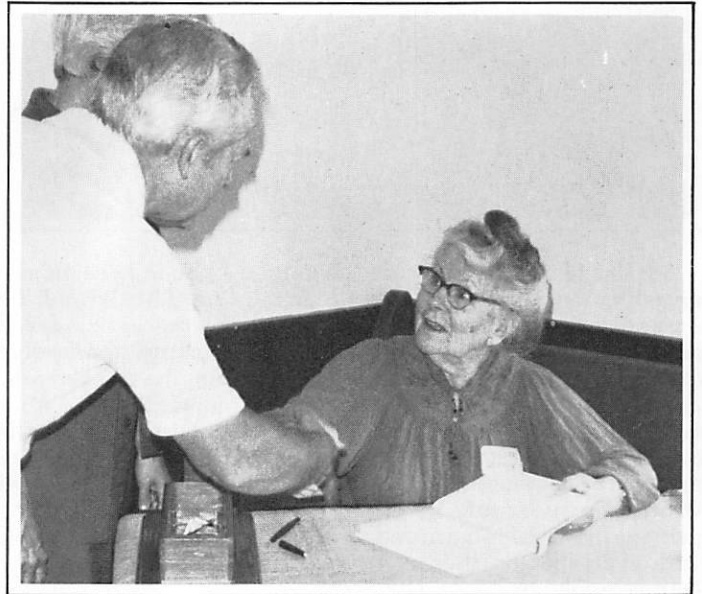
A regular columnist with *BitterSweet*, Wini Drag deals in old books at her Haunted Book Shop on Paris Hill.

# *In Dunnybrook People Never Die*

*The Life of Gladys Hasty Carroll* by Jack C. Barnes



left: the schoolhouse; right: Gladys Hasty Carroll



In the shadow of Agamenticus Mountain in the town of South Berwick, there is a small area referred to locally as "Dunnybrook." The name was derived long ago from the segment of the Dunny which is the source of Warren Brook. There is a gentle roll to the land; there are the usual ubiquitous stone walls. One can tell at a glance that most of the land was farmed at one time or another, but there is little in the way of serious farming going on there today. Over the years the forests have tiptoed back into fields that were cleared with little more than an axe and a yoke of oxen. Even if one does not know the history of the Berwicks, it is apparent from the small cemeteries (some with unmarked stones), the houses and farm buildings, that folks have lived here for a long, long time. The road leading to Dunnybrook is devious and narrow with even narrower roads branching off to the right and left. One does not have to travel far on some of them before they cease to be asphalt and suddenly become rough, dusty roads that are indicative of what all the roads in the area were like a few decades ago.

One day my wife and I were motoring over one of these back roads called the "York Road." After driving

several miles without encountering any houses, we finally spotted a man loading wood into a battered pick-up truck.

"Is this the road to York?" I inquired.

"Ayah, 't is, but 't ain't much of a rud once y'get beyond he-ah."

Since it had not been much of a road up to there, we turned back.

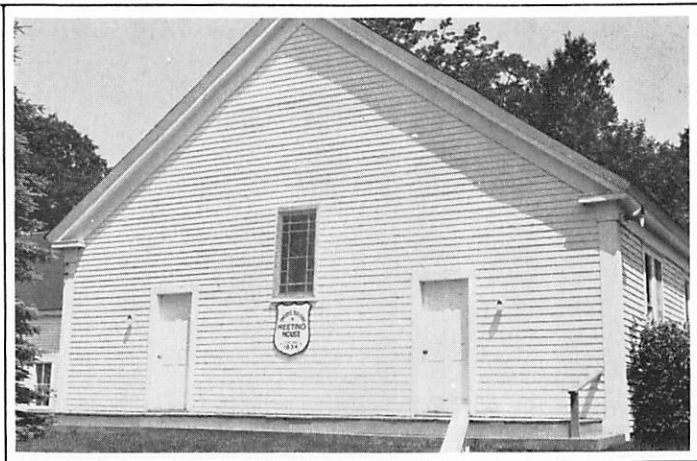
This description can fit hundreds of postage stamp rural areas in Maine or over in New Hampshire, which is just a "stone's throw" from South Berwick; but there is something unique about Dunnybrook that sets it apart from most rural areas. It has a history—a tradition. "People don't die who ever lived in Dunnybrook," as one of its long-time residents, Lorenzo Hooper, once remarked. Life flows on as endlessly as the water in the tiny stream called "the Dunny" flows into the Newichewannock, which in turn flows into the Piscataqua, to empty eventually into the Atlantic.

For over three centuries Dunnybrook has been the home of Marrs, Earls, Warrens, Emerys, Hastys, and others. For those who are curious as to who some of these people were—Gib Hasty, who returned

barefooted and in rags from the Revolutionary War, for instance, or the lovable Columby Warren who lived to be ninety-four—they can soon find themselves on intimate terms with these generations of folks because of one person—Gladys Hasty Carroll. She recorded over three hundred years of history in a remarkable book first published in 1943 called **Dunnybrook**.

It was while riding with her father in abandoned areas thirty or forty miles from Dunnybrook and listening to him reminisce about the people who had once lived there that she thought, "Oh, if only someone had written down who these people were and what they did—if only the bare facts!"

As she pondered the tragedy of so many forgotten people, she began to think about her own Dunnybrook and her own people. "That was one of the reasons I wrote **Dunnybrook**," she explained one day as we sat in the comfortable Victorian parlor of the home that had belonged to her parents and, before that, to her grandparents. (That is the way of things in Dunnybrook. It always has been.)



left: the  
*Emery's Bridge  
Meetinghouse  
(1834)  
in Dunnybrook*

As I read **Dunnybrook**, I found myself constantly amazed that such a true account of so many generations could be recorded—including dialogue that has so wonderfully preserved a dialect too rapidly vanishing from our small rural communities as they become more and more cosmopolitan. Mrs. Carroll wrote **Dunnybrook** as if she had personally lived on intimate terms with every person that ever lived in Dunnybrook, or as if she were an immortal writing about mortal beings.

"Aren't at least some segments of **Dunnybrook** fictional—some of the dialogue, at least?" I inquired.

"Absolutely not," Mrs. Carroll responded rather adamantly. "I was especially blessed. Our people lived here so many generations. The Warrens were great story-tellers. The stories they told were about the people of Dunnybrook, what they had done and said. They were able to transfer all this to me. It flowed through my mind like music."

Actually, Mrs. Carroll first began to portray the people of Dunnybrook as far back as 1933 in her first novel—**As The Earth Turns**—a best seller that was made into a movie.

I have often heard the question asked during discussions of Mrs. Carroll's works, especially **As The Earth Turns**: "Didn't the people of Dunnybrook object to being portrayed?"

The question is legitimate, since many an author who has attempted to veil real people has succeeded only in arousing resentment and even open hostility among those who objected to having their private lives paraded across the pages of a novel.

Such is certainly not the case with **As The World Turns** or any other works by Gladys Hasty Carroll that portray the people of Dunnybrook. She has never resorted to sensationalism. She is an ingenuous person writing about ingenuous people whose roots go deep into the glacial soil of South Berwick. They have no

right: Bernice  
Dorr Grover and  
behind her  
photos of the  
folk play casts;  
below right:  
Mary Bickford  
Holton, chief  
hostess at  
Sunday-in-  
Dunnybrook



"skeletons in the closet." Each person of each generation had his or her niche in the community and was loved and continues to be loved today by Dunnybrookers who resemble very closely the old-fashioned extended family. **As The Earth Turns** and **Dunnybrook** are the stories of their lives, and they are proud of the way they have lived and of what they have accomplished.

In 1935 a most remarkable development sprang from **As The Earth Turns** and has been recorded in Gladys Hasty Carroll's most recent work—**The Book That Came Alive**. In 1934 the Carrolls had returned from Minnesota where Dr.

Herbert Carroll had been teaching and doing research. Dr. Carroll, a native of Greenfield, Massachusetts, had obtained a leave of absence to give their son Warren, then two years old, "at least a year of running freely in and out of his grandmother's kitchen, of helping his grandfather in the barn, of becoming confident in the woods, of playing with Dunnybrook children and absorbing his mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual bonds with his heritage."

The Carrolls succeeded in purchasing the hill across from Mrs. Carroll's parents (the home in which they now reside) and became the first family to build a house in Dunnybrook in the twentieth century. The folks of Dunnybrook followed a long-standing tradition of meeting in a casual way on Saturday nights or Sunday afternoons in dooryards, on porches, or in parlors, to reminisce and discuss various subjects relative to rural folks whose lives were deeply enmeshed in the soil and one another.

Conversation drifted toward the Meetinghouse that was constructed in 1834 after Dunnybrookers had broken away from the local church in opposition to the concept of damnation of infants' souls. For many years the old Meetinghouse had remained unused, while the district school served as a center for local activities, especially at Christmas. In 1934 all the district schools in South Berwick were closed, and the rural children bussed to the town school. Then folks began to discuss the feasibility of reopening the Meetinghouse and approaching the Selectmen about purchasing the Dunnybrook School to be preserved

and used as a community center. Money would be needed to make repairs on the Meetinghouse and alterations on the schoolhouse.

"Let's put on a play," someone suggested.

"Maybe Gladys'll get an idea and write one for us."

And so a segment of **As The Earth Turns** became a folk play such as Maine had not seen since the annual *Old Peabody Pew* based on Kate Wiggins' romance and performed at Tory Hill in Hollis.

Here the people of Dunnybrook revealed a rather unique quality. Most Maine people would have shied away from exposing their personal lives to the public. But the people of Dunnybrook were elated in their own reserved way to be cast in roles that were so familiar to them. As Mrs. Carroll explained, "It was their story. They were these people, and they were proud of it. If strangers could not understand what they were doing, that was their problem."

The play was to be staged in the open meadow belonging to Mrs. Carroll's father about a quarter of a mile from Emery's Bridge Road. The three-act play spanned three seasons—spring, summer, and autumn. It included the plowing scene in spring and a haying scene in summer. Performances were to be given on two consecutive afternoons. Plans were made to seat 300 people at fifty cents a ticket. No one was certain if anyone would come to see the play. Other than the need to raise money, it really did not matter to the members of the cast if no spectators appeared, since they so looked forward to performing their own story with or without an audience. Signs were put out at strategic points, for no one but

those who knew Dunnybrook could ever find their way.

People did find their way to the Hasty meadow. They came by the hundreds up the dusty road. All the seats were rapidly filled, and then people had to sit on the grass wherever a vacant spot could be found. That first very hot afternoon in August, 1935, a new tradition was born. Summer after summer the play

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**The people of Dunnybrook never objected to being portrayed in novel form by Mrs. Carroll. "Each person of each generation had his or her niche in the community and was loved and continues to be loved today."**

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was performed to thousands of people who came from every state in the Union and many foreign countries. Newspapers from several states sang its praise. For example, the *Boston Sunday Herald* compared it to *Oberammergau*, a seventeenth century Passion Play first presented in Switzerland in 1634. Sinclair Lewis, author of such novels as *Main Street* and *Babbitt*, came and was enthralled by what he saw and heard.

As the sands flowed through the hourglass, those who originally took such children's parts as Bun and John Shaw were cast in older roles and the children's roles were filled by those who had been babies when the play was first performed. At times when some member of the cast moved away as some Dunnybrookers had always done, there was someone else to step into the vacant role and perform expertly. Perhaps if only one star were to be singled out, the laurel wreath would be awarded to Lorenzo Hooper, who played the role of Mark Shaw.

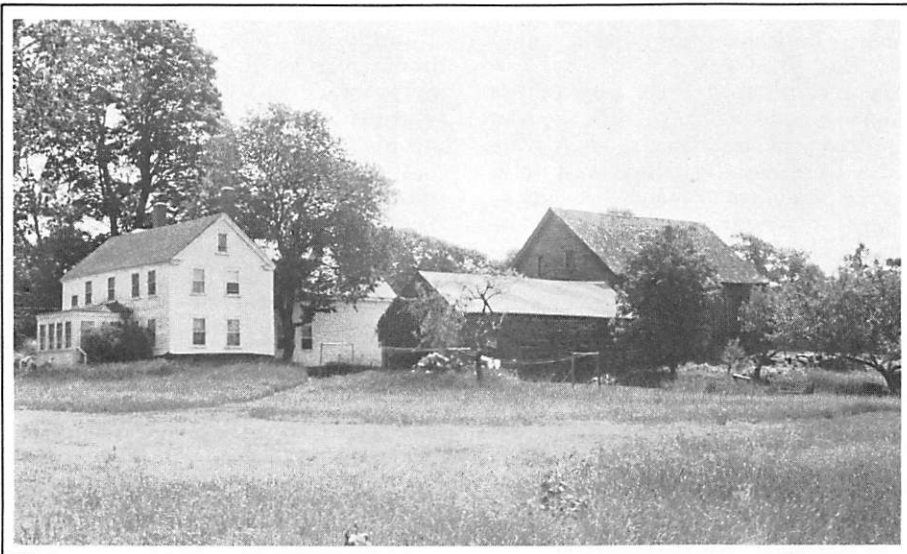
In the summer of 1943 that chapter in the story of Dunnybrook was in a sense forever closed. The United States was by then deeply committed to World War II. The men of Dunnybrook had responded to their country's need for fighting men just as they had done since the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. There were suddenly not enough men remaining to play the male roles in the drama, so public performances came to an end. When World War II ended, all the

Dunnybrook men returned safely home just as they had done after every other war. But, just as World War II had uprooted millions of people all over the world and for better or worse the world never would return to pre-war conditions, many Dunnybrook folks elected to seek their fortunes in distant places. Thus, the lovely folk play that had entertained thousands in the Hasty meadow, tucked away in a microcosmic portion of the universe, would never be resumed.

But if one chapter in the lives of the people of Dunnybrook had been concluded, a new chapter would begin. In 1943 the first edition of Gladys Hasty Carroll's **Dunnybrook** was published, preserving for posterity all the fascinating men and women of Dunnybrook.

It is too often the case with families and groups of friends who are scattered about that they meet only at weddings and funerals. In Dunnybrook, however, this had never been the case. It has already been stated that Dunnybrook folks got together almost every Saturday night or Sunday afternoon, a delightful tradition that generated the very successful folk play. These meetings now generated a new concept—an occasional Dunnybrook Day to be held at the Little Red School (Dunnybrook School), which had been sold to the community by the Selectmen of South Berwick for the sum of ten dollars back in 1935. The old school house was transformed into a community center, equipped with a kitchen that included a huge range which one of the group salvaged before it could be sent off to a dump. At first the Annual Dunnybrook Day was limited to those who lived or ever had lived in Dunnybrook, and held on a Sunday in late June—a time when Dunnybrook folks who were scattered about the world could return to visit just as Johnny Marr returned again and again to visit with old friends and relatives in the book. Later, however, it was decided to open the doors and invite the general public to attend these affairs, thus raising funds for community projects, including scholarships for Dunnybrook boys and girls going on to college. (This small community can boast of a surprising number of native Ph.D.'s).





*The Emery Farm*

Recently my wife and I were invited by Mrs. Carroll to attend a Sunday-in-Dunnybrook. We arrived early so as to have one of Dunnybrook's famous breakfasts of assorted fresh fruit, homemade biscuits, scrambled eggs and bacon, a savory potato hash, and molasses doughnuts.

When we arrived, the doors of the schoolhouse were open wide just as they probably were back in 1834 to welcome Dunnybrook pupils on the opening day of their new school. Gladys Hasty Carroll was there herself to greet us with her quiet manner and warm smile. We purchased tickets for breakfast from her fifteen-year-old grandson, Jamie Watson, who lives in Pleasant Grove, Utah, and comes to spend the summers with his grandparents.

We were immediately served by a young lady who is related to Mrs. Carroll. Since I had also come to do some photography, I wandered out into the kitchen and met the indispensable Mary Bickford Holton, chief hostess of the Sunday-in-Dunnybrook, who played the role of the second Bun Shaw in the folk play. She was busily involved with preparing food for hungry appetites. Sitting behind a large table in one corner of the schoolroom was Bernice Dorr Grover of York. She was selling copies of Mrs. Carroll's **Unless You Die Young, As The Earth Turns, Dunnybrook, The Book That Came Alive, and Only Fifty Years Ago**, in which Mrs. Carroll described Bernice as a little girl: "tall and thin

with yellow braids and eyes the color of the April sky." I purchased a copy of **The Book That Came Alive** (all profits from sales here go into the community fund) and took it, along with some copies of Mrs. Carroll's works that we had brought with us, to a desk where the author was signing autographs.

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**And so a segment of *As The Earth Turns* became a folk play. . . Most Maine folks would have shied away from exposing their personal lives to the public, but the people of Dunnybrook were elated in their own reserved way to be cast in roles that were so familiar to them . . . summer after summer the play was presented to thousands of people who came from every state in the Union and many foreign countries.**

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As the morning progressed, we chatted with many interesting people including the Trimble who had come all the way from Texas. Over on the wall behind Bernice Dorr Grover were photographs of the members of every cast that had performed the famous folk play over the years. It was obvious that Mary Bickford Holton has lost most of the freckles that were so prominent when she played the precocious Bun Shaw.

As the hands of the antique clock neared the hour for church to commence at the Meetinghouse just down the road, the schoolroom suddenly became almost empty. Mrs. Carroll remained to greet late-comers; and of course, Mary continued sedulously at work in the kitchen supervising the preparation for dinner, which would feature more good old-fashioned cooking prepared from recipes handed down from one generation of Dunnybrook families to another.

My wife and I stepped into the schoolroom where a few children were at play. I could almost see Bun, John, and other children playing "Haley Over" with their teacher, and hear the squeaking of the swings as each child pumped energetically to attain a higher altitude than the others.

Later we drove the short distance to the old Meetinghouse where Reverend Mildred Hooper (who played the first Cora Shaw, wife of Mark Shaw) was conducting services attended by people of many denominations. The door was closed, so we chose not to interrupt. But we could hear the congregation singing with the traditional Dunnybrook spirit. Across the road stands the old Emery Farm. It was one of the Emerys who donated the land for the Meetinghouse.

On our return from Dunnybrook, we drive over a back road and soon realized that the area we were driving through had not been altered much since the days of **As The Earth Turns**. The spirit of Dunnybrook remained with us every mile of the way. Someday, I thought, long after Gladys Hasty Carroll has laid down her pen for the last time, someone—perhaps her grandson Jamie, or his sister Caroline—will take up the same pen and write a second Dunnybrook to bring the world up to date with the people and events there; for as Lorenzo Hooper (Mark Shaw) once said, "Nobody dies that ever lived here in Dunnybrook."

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*Barnes, a faithful correspondent with BitterSweet and many other publications, continues to teach at Bonney Eagle High School and York Community College. He is presently at work on a book about Maine's women writers.*

# Goings On

## Tidewater: A Review

It's always a privilege, around here especially, to preview new works of creative minds—to be the first audience, as it were. There's something so fresh and new about it all—as if it were created just for you and awaiting your approval.

Such almost seemed to be the case with this new play about the life and characters of Sarah Orne Jewett, presented in premiere performance at the Norway Library. Now, that's an unusual space—a high-ceilinged, beautifully accoustical architectural creation of the past century. And Nick Durso, the talented author/director of *Tidewater*, had spent the afternoon constructing a "theatre-in-the-round" set there out of three movable platforms, like any travelling road show. And, well, he deserved to be in vaudeville himself, standing up there in his workboots, in front of a small but receptive audience, eager for our comments and throwing out lines like: "We'll be selling scripts if you like it; if you don't, we'll give you one." Obviously, he wanted us to like this labor of love, this play about one of America's most-celebrated short story writers.

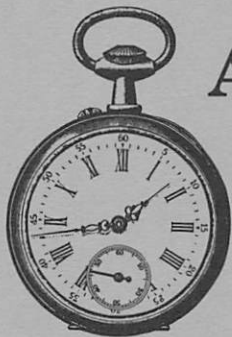
And like it, we did—with a few reservations. It was a three-person play: Sarah (played by Beth Dunlap in her best performance we've yet seen) as girl and woman; and her characters (played variously by Susan Poulin and Millard Fillmore of the University of Southern Maine, Portland Players, Portland Stage Company, and Children's Theatre of Maine fame).

The first thing one noticed, of course, was Nick Durso's uncanny knack for creating scenes out of the best of props and costumes—old chairs, hooked rugs, a china doll, seaweed—a simplicity born of real understanding. The second thing was Sarah's humor—often subtle and indirect; but sometimes like being hit over the head with a Maine mackerel.

And the third thing was the author's gleaning of the purest of words and thoughts, the best of characters to talk about the seriousness of life in Maine in the 1890's. Out of all the words written by Jewett in her many works like *The White Heron*, or *Deephaven*, or *The Country Doctor*, Durso has picked some of the cleanest and most descriptive: the houses of Maine "facing the sea apprehensively, like their owners," for instance, or referring to the "stony edge" of Maine people that hides their reclusive minds.

One of the finest of scenes is that of Elijah, the fisherman. It is Fillmore's most

page 30 ...



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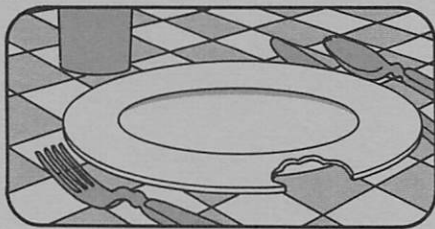
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## ON THE DIFFICULTY OF FINDING WILD HICKORY NUTS

When considering the central problems of a capitalistic society, someone who cares about language might land on what commercial enterprise does to words. "Gourmet" has certainly taken a beating, and there are other words that cry out for rehabilitation. "Natural" and "organic" demand attention up here in the country, where they have fallen on hard times, indeed. Whenever I see either word, especially on food labels, an old Euell Gibbons commercial replays itself in my head. After crunching down on a spoonful of Grape Nuts cereal, he states confidentially, "Its taste reminds me of wild hick'ry nuts."

My husband and I concluded from that commercial the definition of "natural" food: it is whatever tastes like wild hick'ry nuts. With no hick'ry nuts around, we tried wild beech nuts, wild acorns, and even a few wild crabapples to determine what "natural" tasted like. The results were disappointing. "Natural" seemed to describe edibles that are barely palatable. I don't really wish to denigrate the late Mr. Gibbons, certainly an authority on stalking wild asparagus, but he can keep his wild hick'ry nuts.

"Natural" is a key word in describing ingredients in just about everything these days: natural fragrance, natural essence, natural taste, natural goodness. (Perhaps the last describes a kind of moral nutrition.) Consider "natural fragrance." Doesn't that just mean that the substance has a fragrance by nature? Most substances do, don't they? The phrase strikes me as a pernicious redundancy because people think it means something. I almost prefer the direct honesty of the label that says "pasteurized, processed cheese-type food." We are exactly sure of what is in the package.

## Food For Thought by Lucia Owen

Once the ad men get hold of a life style to sell, the words that describe it are goners. "Organic" now seems to describe the behavior, political attitudes, and gardens of people who eat "natural" food. Labels and commercials tell me what I should look like while planting flowers or harvesting squash in my natural organic garden. Somehow I have never felt like those flower-crowned long-haired ladies on the bottles of organic shampoos. If I wore one of their marvelous flowing dresses, I would step on the hem in my Bean boots.

I'm not sure yet what organic gardening is, but I have worked out my own definition based on experience. Leaves, hay, and grass clippings are organic because I can scrounge them myself. At \$3.79 a roll, black plastic mulch is not organic. Cow manure right from the cow is organic; right from a bag and pre-composted, it isn't. Each spring I watch my husband spread seven yards of prime Black Angus dressing on the garden. That is very definitely organic. His Bean boots take several days to get over it.

"Natural" and "organic" have no meaning left, and that's a shame, especially in Maine, where one can have the real experience of both nature and wholeness. Here there's room enough to scout up one's own private natural and organic wild raspberry patch. I visited friends earlier in the summer and found them eating lunch—pan-fried trout and wild strawberries. A meal like that should be what those two words above describe.

Every right-thinking person knows how to handle summer berries and freshly-caught trout, but there are other things that grow in greater abundance that challenge the resourceful to organic research. We have a friend who has developed a fine recipe for choke-cherry wine. The taste suggests sweet vermouthe or Dubonnet. We haven't tried to brew it

ourselves yet, only because the choke-cherry crop seems to come when we are up to our ears in plum tomatoes. Using both independent and joint research, my husband and his father worked out high bush cranberry sauce. High bush cranberries, considered mere ornamentals by most, including W. Atlee Burpee himself, are true cranberries. Their sour, even bitter taste (heightened by frost) requires loads of sugar. I've made high bush cranberry sauce two or three times under the supervision of my husband, who says, "Just add sugar 'til it tastes right." Several more test batches seem to be in order before we formulate an accurate recipe. If these fruits are natural—just look along any sandy roadside—surely what one does with them after harvesting must be organic.

I've found wild grape vines in the woods, though the grapes never seem to ripen. In true irony, having found no grapes, I found a superior and, as far as I know, unique recipe for Concord grape conserve. Though I have to buy the grapes as well as all the other ingredients for this, I imagine there was a time when the conserve was a natural and organic way of preserving grapes. To us it tastes like fall. How fortunate to have two major turkey holidays so close together in early winter, so that we can slather on the conserve.

### Grape Conserve

5 lbs. Concord grapes  
5 lbs. sugar  
3 large juicy oranges  
1 lb. raisins  
1 lb. walnut meats, chopped

Skin the grapes, reserve the skins, and boil the pulp until it is soft. (Unfortunately, the only way I've discovered to skin the grapes is to squirt out the pulp by hand, grape by grape. Enlist help.) Strain the seeds from the pulp. (Try a food mill.) Peel the oranges and cook the peels until tender in a little water. Chop them fine. Juice the oranges. Take the orange juice, grape skins, cooked grape pulp, orange peel, sugar, raisins, and walnuts, and combine in a large enamel pot. Cook the mixture slowly until the sugar is dissolved and the mixture is thick. Pack into sterile jars, as for jam. I cannot recall precisely how much this makes. The



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recipe is from a very old book and gives little information beside the list of ingredients and the order of combining them.

Grape conserve is just plain opulent with fowl or pork. We also warm it a bit and use it on vanilla ice cream or poached pears. Oranges, walnuts, and raisins obviously don't grow along the roadsides or in the woods of the north country, but they grow somewhere and are not synthesized or pre-packaged. On a cold rainy November night in front of the Franklin stove, we happily eat fricasseed chicken and smashed squash, both liberally dosed with grape conserve. We feel comfortable, warm, drowsy, and secure, especially if the wind rattles the windows. The evening restores our faith in our own nature, human nature, outdoor nature, and general togetherness. It even restores the sense that sadly misused and commercialized words have real and valid meaning.

## AUTUMN INTERLUDE

The autumn leaves at sunset  
Become entangled with the dusk;  
A solitary nighthawk sounds its cry—  
Perhaps its last before it departs,  
Leaving me alone in the valley  
To face another winter in solitude.  
But for now, I shall enjoy this  
interlude—

This final breath of caressing air  
Before shower upon shower of  
autumn leaves

Sever their ties and tumble down,  
Down to form a carpet on the ground  
More exquisite than Tabriz.

Jack Barnes  
Hiram

## FREIGHT TRAIN REVERY

I like to think freight trains  
Exist for my pleasure.  
Surely their cars are empty,  
And all the wondrous places  
Named on their sides  
Were put there for dreamers like me  
Who count their day a success  
When they are stopped by blinking  
red lights

To let freight trains pass.

T. Jewell Collins  
Hamden, Conn.

# Reader's Room:

## HALLOO-THE TURKEY

Thanksgiving Day is actually a harvest thanksgiving and owes its origin to the Pilgrim Fathers, who first set apart a day in America for that purpose at Plymouth (1621) and since 1862 the present date has been adapted throughout the U.S., Traditionally celebrated on the last Thursday in November, it was changed by an act of Congress in 1941 to the fourth Thursday of that month.

There is a stir of excitement in the air brought on by the approaching holiday at which families across the land gather for the happiest of occasions. Unforgettable feasts grace tables on this day, but the center of attention is the roast turkey. The history of this bird is rather interesting. Here are some stories gleaned from the past.

*Turkey* is the name for two American bird species, the largest of game birds. The origin of the domesticated varieties is the North American continent; the bird was once abundant in the United States and was hunted some places with greyhounds. Wild birds are both larger and more ornate than the domesticated turkeys, which have, however, been improved by introduction of wild blood from time to time in recent years. The largest domestic variety is the mammoth bronze, the plumage of which is a beautiful dark bronze with metallic lustre. Among the varieties are the white, buff, slate or lavender, and black. Other species occur in Honduras and possess plumage of great brilliancy, with eyed tail feathers.

It was a thrilling experience, when living in the South, to hear the turkeys drum and call in the woods near my place of residence. The wild birds are wary, swift in flight and a hunter is the best in his field to be able to track and shoot one of these. I had hoped to see one of the gobblers who came close to the edge of the woods, but not once did one come out into the open.

At this time of year, organizations have turkey raffles, and to our door was once brought a huge live bird, won by Dad. The gobbler was put into the cellar to be fed and watered for days before Thanksgiving. It was not used to being confined and noisily protested. The day of execution arrived and, axe in hand, Dad went to ready the turkey for the cook. It was very quiet in the cellar and a few minutes later, up came Dad, very sheepish. He just didn't have the heart to kill that bird so a neighbor undertook the chore.

We spent our vacations on our grandparents' farm and, one day, dressed in a bright blue suit with a flaming red tie, I was confronted with a puffed-up, angry turkey. He came at me with increasing speed, but fright lends wings to legs and no six-year-old child ran faster than I did, right up the stairs and behind the screen door just in time. If Grandmother hadn't come then to see what the commotion was about, that turkey would have pecked me for certain as he thought I was a challenge to him as leader of his flock. Never again did I venture out in that suit with the bright red banner.

*Helen J. Mooney  
Rumford*

## DAVID McKEEN and ANOTHER BLOWDOWN IN STONEHAM

David McKeen, Jr., was born in Stoneham, Maine, on January 6, 1805, the son of David and Anna McAlister McKeen. His parents came from Fryeburg—his father being one of the first settlers in West Stoneham.

David, Sr. built his first house of logs after the manner of building in those days, and it was in this primitive abode that David, Jr. was born.

When he was a child, there was a heavy windblow and the large forest trees fell in every direction. David, Sr., fearing that his humble home would be crushed beneath some of

those huge trees that grew near the house, fled with his family (consisting of wife Anna and three children, Aseneth, David, Jr., and Joel) to a potato hole near the house where they lay for three days and nights, listening to the howling of the blast and the thundering and crashing of falling trees.

After the wind had subsided in a measure and they could crawl out of their subterranean retreat, they found their house roofless and the forest as far as the eye could see a scene of wild confusion.




*David and Mehitable McKeen*

Both Davids found Stoneham to be ultimately the best place to reside. At one point father and son made up their minds to go to Ohio. Not finding things as they expected, they returned, having been gone from home three months and travelling the entire distance to Ohio and back on foot!

David, Jr. planted an elm tree while yet a youth. Still standing near the site of his home, it remains a monument to his memory, reminding his loved ones of "Uncle David," who for so many years tilled the soil at the foot of Speckled Mountain.

*Mrs. Richard Jones  
Norway*

*Mrs. Jones is a double-relative of David McKeen, Jr., who had twelve children by his first wife Mehitable and three by his second wife Esther Gammon. Mary, the daughter of David and Mehitable, later married Isaiah McAlister and was Mrs. Jones' great-grandmother on her father's side. Son Loren married Lydia*



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*McAlister and was her great-grandfather on her mother's side!*

## THE LITTLE SCHOOLHOUSE

Each school district in Andover back in the 1920's had its own little white school house. The teacher usually boarded nearby because she had to bring in the water and the wood and start the fire, hopefully to warm the room before nine o'clock.

Fresh out of Gorham Normal School in the fall of '27, I thought I was equal to the task I had signed up for before I had even received my diploma in June.

The playground was full of sound and action long before I gave my hand bell a vigorous shake. Even now, in 1981, I see the two long lines forming to march into the building. Were there seats enough? I wondered. Yes, thank goodness, there were just exactly 36 seats and every one held a bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked youngster, all grades from one through eight. Some were at least a head taller than their teacher, who stood five-feet-one in low-heeled shoes.

We said the Lord's Prayer, saluted the flag and sang *America*. With help from the older students, all names were recorded and suddenly it was time for recess. I decided to line the girls up on one side and the boys on the other facing the two back doors, and in this way, two by two, get them to the separate water closets at the end of a long walk. After that they could use what time was left for play outside.

Soon after they were in their seats again someone wanted a drink of water. Oh, my! No one had brought any. I sent the biggest boy to the nearest neighbor's home to fetch some—meanwhile thinking, "Oh, dear, Lucy is the head of the school board, what will she think?" When the water arrived, all 36 were suddenly very thirsty, so we all enjoyed cool, fresh water from *one* long-handled gray agateware dipper.

A really amazing amount was learned that day before it was time for the home-packed cold lunches. It was a warm September noon so we all sat on the front steps or under the pine branches on the slippery needles, opened our tin buckets, and enjoyed

our various and sundry lunches. Such was the beginning of the year 1927-28 at East Andover, Maine.

However, days grew colder and I bribed a few big boys and girls to bring in wood and kindling. I had to get there long before the gang to even begin to thaw the frost from the thin windowpanes.

Many a morning it was so frigid, in spite of all my efforts with the huge wood stove, that we would have an hour of very intense phys. ed., and still have to hurry into our heavy duds and down to Lucy's where we all sat on the enormous braided rug before her flame-filled fireplace. There we played games to learn number facts and everything from A to Z. What I couldn't think of, Lucy could, for she had been a teacher not too long before.

How about discipline, you ask? No worry. I must remind you that the teacher in those days demanded respect and attention and got it. Once I kept a boy after school to reason with him because he had melted some crayons on the stove, which was right behind him. When I said, "Why are you crying? I haven't said a word to you yet and I haven't touched you," he sobbed, "When I get home my mother will." That's the way it was in those days.

There is one thing I'll never forget about that first year of teaching. A man on Farmers Hill had need of a strong boy to help with his farm work, so early most every afternoon, there he would come a-knocking on the inner door. "I want Willie," he'd proclaim loudly. At first I let the lad go, but this happened so often that Willie was soon failing in school work. So one afternoon when the knock came and Willie unfolded his long legs and started down the aisle, I planted myself firmly between him and the door, saying "No, Willie, you may not be excused. Sit down, please." No one knows how easily he could have set me aside, or how hard my heart pounded as he towered over me in indecision. Slowly, without one word but with a long look at me, Willie slumped into his seat and took up his book. I went then to tell the man standing at the door that Willie would not be coming. As I recall the scene, I think at first he could hardly believe his ears, and then his stomping boots told me how angry Mr. Philbrick was.

I helped my scholars put on a program for their parents one evening and it was a joyful event to treasure forever. The school's one room was packed. Not even was there standing room only—some stood outside peering through the windows. I'm not quite sure who learned the most that year—the 36 youngsters or their new young teacher.

*Marie Lang  
Andover*

## THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is here and it is time to be deliberately thankful again. I'm always thankful. . . for something, but I'm aware that on Thanksgiving I'm supposed to consciously count my blessings. How does the old hymn go: "Count your many blessings, name them one by one. . ." I used to sing it in Sunday School and would dutifully enumerate for myself my blessings of family, home, and food. But my enthusiasm for the ritual went into the second half of the list which was a counting of things: my purple desk, my "Gone With The Wind" paper dolls, Hershey candy bars. . . if I wrote out a list of my blessings today it could be the same sort of list: family, home, my washer and dryer, a good cup of coffee, Hershey candy bars.

But, being older, I am not satisfied with such glibness. I ask myself seriously, "What is the one blessing of my life that has made the most difference, that would impoverish my life the most if it were taken away?" I am astonished and somewhat dismayed to find that the answer to that question is—People!

How can I possibly make that answer? Most of the hurt, disappointment, frustration and anger of my life has been because of people. The hurt and disappointment came early with the first snub by a childhood best friend, and recurred through the years when adults didn't

care enough or at the right times, with the loss of high school beaux, and with misunderstandings and conflicts with college and community peers. I have been frustrated by people who have been, by my standards, thoughtless, selfish, insensitive, uncommitted. I have been angry with liars and litter bugs, bigots, insolent youths, egotists, and opportunists. I have considered people the bane of my existence and a plague on the earth.

How can I count people as my greatest blessing when it is also true that no person of my acquaintance needs people less than I do? I am basically an introvert and need all the time I can get to think my own thoughts, pursue my own interests, work on my own projects. I have resented demands made on me by family and friends. I have said more than once, when working in some organization, "This job would be easy and a pleasure if only I didn't have to work with people." All my life people have interfered with my fussy I and my creative self.

There are, of course, easy answers. It is obvious that living without people would be like gardening without plants. The pleasures of books, music, antiques, theater, wine, art, clothes, food . . . of everything. . . come from people. The joys of good conversation, of laughing, of loving are possible because of people. People, not things, enrich life.

People have enriched my life not only with pleasure, but by giving me direction. By being themselves, people have shown me what I wanted to be as well as what I did *not* want to be. People have made demands on me that I would never have dared to make on myself so often that when I have achieved personal success it has been because someone asked me to try for it.

People have also released me from the vacuum of self. To live in a small town is, if one is really a part of the life of the town, to belong to organizations and to serve on committees.

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Although most of us become involved in the beginning for personal reasons—our own pleasure or status—we soon discover that committee work takes too much time and energy to be continued for such frivolous reasons. We find ourselves staying involved because we care about whether or not little girls can be Girl Scouts, about good books for the library, about good government for the town, about pollution in the rivers, about activities for the very old and the teenagers, about whether or not Sunday School keeps. We are working for people when we serve on these committees.

We get tired of the work. We get fed up, and we say, "I'm all done. No more. I'm going to stay home and mind my own business and enjoy life." But that is when we discover how much we care. We find ourselves becoming involved in issues we don't wish to face, of working on committees when we are too tired to work, of caring when we don't want to care. And I have found that being concerned is not a sometime emotion:

it builds, it accumulates until you end up caring about all states and stages of human existence.

People are the greatest blessing of my life. I care about people, all kinds of people, even those I don't like, even bigots and Yuppies and opportunists and despoilers. That sounds pious. I'm sorry that it does because I don't feel at all pious. Instead, I feel rather grim. It is a terrible burden. I don't understand why, but it is a burden that I carry.

On this Thanksgiving Day, in this year of war, racism, riots, moratoriums, pollution, pornography, famine and crime, I shall count my greatest blessing as people. God help me.

*This excerpt from Joyce Butler's book, Pages From a Journal, was printed by permission. It also appeared in Lady's Circle Magazine in November, 1977. The book may be purchased for \$8.95 plus \$1.45 postage & sales tax from O.T.S. Ltd., P. O. Box 110, Saco, Maine 04072.*



## DRIED APPLE PIES

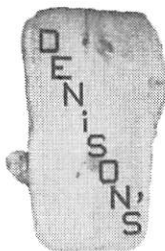
I loathe, abhor, detest, despise,  
Abominate dried apple pies.  
I like good bread, I like good meat,  
Or anything that's fit to eat;  
But of all poor grub beneath the skies  
The poorest is dried apple pies.  
Give me the toothache or sore eyes  
But don't give me dried apple pies.

The farmer takes his gnarliest fruit,  
'Tis wormy, bitter, and hard to boot.  
He leaves the hulls to make us cough,  
And don't take half the peeling off.  
Then on a dirth cord 'tis strung  
And in a garret window hung,  
And there it serves to roost for flies  
Until 'tis made up into pies.  
Tread on my corns or tell me lies,  
But don't give me dried apple pies.  
—Anon.

Taken from an old cookbook and  
submitted by:

Carol Mills  
West Paris

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# THESE HILLS, OUR VILLAGE

*by Anne Scott-Woodson*

The hills were darkening as we emerged from the wood and stood a moment feeling the cold flow down the sweep of meadow. The barn was a silhouette before the pink glow of the winter sunset. Our tiredness lessened as nature provided the beauty and a silence broken only by our breathing and the far-away chunk of wood being split for the evening stove fire. Such is our welcome from an afternoon spent cutting trees.

These foothills of the White Mountains form a circle about our village. Names of Stackpole, Merrill, Collomny, Green, and Chapman give lasting tribute to those early settlers who carved homesteads on ridges and hillsides. Many remain; others exist only within the tangled, tumbled foundations and scattered cemeteries found deep in the woods.

In this setting, life develops seasonal paces. We have become a part of this cycle of survival. Our bodies have become our best tools and we use them well, having learned by necessity, stubbornness, and instinct. Success is ours, mistakes are ours. The learning process is a wealthy one; the quality of life so enabling we have never questioned the wisdom of our choice of life in a rural village. We have our time to paint, write, and sculpt, to farm and garden. To this we have added the riches of carpentry, masonry, house painting, sugaring, and woodcutting. Our gray heads may speak of fifty and sixty, our spirits do not.



Each week we devote a day to culling our woods, a process leading to better development in the forest and an increasing woodpile in the shed. In winter we greet the task with humor. It's the only way, for never again will the work be as clumsy. Our feet are thrust into bulky felt-lined boots, our hands into insulated gloves and mittens. Forming the base of all clothing are the long johns. They are a second skin when the temperature reaches forty and below. To this add a light shirt, a sweater, perhaps another shirt, and then a jacket. Instead of two women we become two lumbering bear, one traveling with a gasoline cane and a bucket of sundries (bar oil, wedges, hammer, saw tools, pliers, measure, and paper towels), the other with a worn chain saw.

Our task is pleasurable for our woods have not been cut for twenty years. Trees of good size are there to leave for the future or simply future cutting; others to cull for our current use. And such variety! Ash, fir, white pine, hemlock, swamp maple, birch, beech—an intermingling along stone walls of rock maples for tapping—and cherry, popple, and wild apple. We feel the glut as well as the good fortune. Today we cut several birch clumps. Full-sized, they had begun the slow process of decay, the tell-tale fungi offered as proof—soft fungi with zones of pale green, tan, and white, and the hardened hoof fungi. How subtle are the colors.



The slow, wrenching fall of a tree tears literally and also tears within us. There is a sadness in the destruction yet tempered with the truth of need for management and the realization that its naked place will be well filled in summer. A remarkable resource.

Our winter cutting makes felling the trees easier. The ferns are hidden beneath the snow or dried, the leaves no longer there to catch the branches. But, regardless of the season, the brush will always be there to haul away, either to a specific site close by, or piled and left for the winter shelter of small animals and birds.

Our years of cutting have taught us never to be sure of a tree, large or small. It is a changing, living plant which may choose at the last instant to fall in an unexpected line, pulled by a twist of stronger unseen fibers. We usually cut out a wedge-shaped piece facing the line of fall, then cut from the back to the wedge. The slow, wrenching fall of a tree literally tears and also tears within us. There is a sadness in the destruction yet tempered with the truth of need for management and the realization that its naked place will be well filled in summer. A remarkable resource.

As birch dries slowly, we cut it first, for it must be split and in the barn by July. The first cool nights will find the barnyard filled with its singular sweet aroma as we warm by the stove fire. Today we left the three-foot lengths of wood stacked to be brought up tomorrow with the tractor. Left also, the ladder-like traces of sawdust in the trampled snow and a large brush pile. Thoughts of siskins, rabbit, and deer feasting in the cold.

As we crossed the meadow, our noses were pinched together in the dry cold. Above, the last glow faded and gave way to a deep twilight blue through which the evening star brightened over the hill we call Merrill.



Deer Run Farm  
Kezar Falls



## ... page e Goings On

real personification and deals with real relationships: of the fisherman's dead wife ("my poor dear") and how "there weren't no secret every lay between us," and how the widower "made up my mind I was gonna get by." In a few words there exists the epitome of the down-easter: that ability to survive in spite of everything. It is the result of Jewett's own gift for people, for moods and feelings and observation of details—and for a dialect that's fast disappearing ("Gorry, dear," and "dreadful good").

Jewett's characters are by far the best part of this play. It's when we get to the heart of Sarah Orne Jewett herself that we feel certain reservations with *Tidewater*. Part of that is inevitable, of course. This play was written under the auspices of the Maine Women Writers Collection at Westbrook College, and with support of the Maine Humanities Council and the National Endowment for Humanities, intending to speak to issues of women developing, succeeding, changing, growing. Though Sarah did do that in her life, she kept much of her own hurts to herself and the character of Sarah in the play comes off rather passionless as a result.

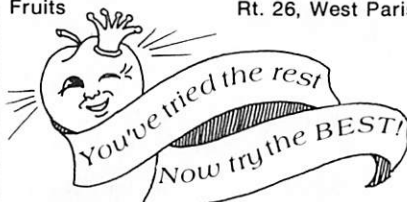
Certainly there was passion in the advice given her by her father, whom she fervently admired, when he admonished her to not write *about* something, rather write the *real thing*, and "don't be afraid to talk to strangers." Certainly there was conflict in Sarah's not wanting to be identified with women who were "confined to the house," yet wanting desperately to have children and understand love. Certainly there was pain in her feeling that "for the honey I give everyone, I sometimes think I'm stripping my best flowers and trampling on their roots." Why then, in *Tidewater*, is this all tossed off almost inconsequentially?

That does not quite ring true either of Sarah or of her well-rounded characters. Of other flaws, there are few: having once re-incarnated fin-de-siecle South Berwick, the playwright then needs to leave it alone, Sarah talks rather too much about it; rather too much in monologues in general. Perhaps it would help to see the whole portrait of Sarah if some of those characters she meets were the real people she knew.

In any case, the play is well worth seeing—for the characters that struggled to be born out of Sarah's mind, and for the wonderful transitions and choices that came from Nick Durso's.

This play and his other—*Circles of Light*, a serious drama about the life of Harriet Beecher Stowe, will be presented throughout Maine this winter, along with a series of lecture topics, speakers and plays related to the writings of Maine women and relevant to contemporary society: social and cultural issues of

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women, domesticity, work, creativity, ethics, education, economics, aging. Among the other authors highlighted will be Elizabeth Oakes Smith, Sarah Payson Willis Parton, Kate Douglas Wiggin, May Sarton. All are contained in the Maine Women Writers Collection at Westbrook College, an archives of works by women, both famous and obscure, who have lived and worked in the state.

N.M.

**Schedule is available from The Maine Women Writers Collection, Westbrook College, Portland, ME 04103.**

## ART

**THE HEBRON ART EXCHANGE:** Fine Art, Crafts. Route 119, Hebron. Drawings, Sculpture, Paintings, Prints, Pottery, Jewelry, Fiberwork, more. Open weekends Dec. 5 & 6, 12 & 13, or by Appointment (966-3141).

**FIBER & FABRIC EXHIBIT:** Jewett Hall, Univ. of Maine, Augusta. Work by Maine artists & designers includes aspects of paper, silk, and wool fibers. A videotape of the artists at work in their own environments and of an audience participation "Tie Piece" will be part of the exhibit. Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Free.

**PICTURES OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE: 200 YEARS OF FRANCO-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP:** Nov. 17-23; Nov. 30-Dec. 17, Alexander Hall Gallery, Westbrook College, Portland. Hrs: Sun.-Thurs. 1-4 p.m. Free.

**ANNUAL MEMBERS CHRISTMAS SALE & EXHIBIT OF ART & HANDICRAFTS:** KVAA, Harlow Gallery, Hallowell, Nov. 24-Dec. 26. Hrs: Tues.-Sat. 1-4 p.m. No admission.

**HOLIDAY ART SHOW & SALE:** Performing Arts Center at Bath, Nov. 25-Dec. 23. Hrs: Weds.-Fri. 9-5, Sat. 12-5.

**JEAN RANDALL, PRINTMAKER:** Payson Gallery, Westbrook College, Nov. 4-Dec. 20. Hrs: Tues.-Fri. 10-4, Sat. & Sun. 1-5. Closed Mon. & holidays.



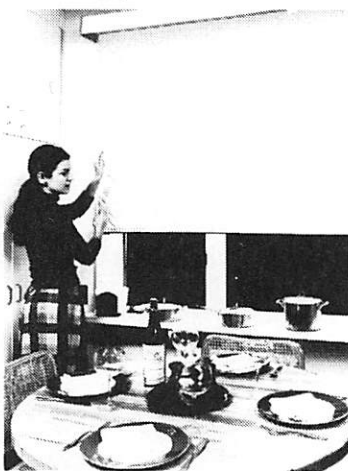
**FRI. NOV. 6:** Concert Dance Company of Boston will present a two-hour formal concert with eight dancers, sets, costumes. Lewiston Junior High Auditorium, Central Ave., 7:30 p.m. Admission \$3.50 adults/\$2.50 children.

**SUN. NOV. 8:** Film *Return of the Secaucus Seven*, a reunion of seven friends who had headed to Washington to an anti-war demonstration seven years earlier. Twin Cinema, Promenade Mall, Lewiston, 2:00 p.m. Admission \$2.00.

**WEDS. NOV. 18 & THURS. NOV. 19:** Artist Richard Lee will conduct

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papermaking workshops for children Weds. Nov. 18 at Auburn Public Library, 2:00 p.m. Thurs. Nov. 19 at Lewiston Public Library, 3:15 p.m. Workshops are free but limited to first 30 children at each location.

SUN. NOV. 22: Film **The Getting of Wisdom** about an Australian turn-of-the-century girlhood. Twin Cinema, Promenade Mall, Lewiston, 2:00 p.m. Admission \$2.00.

FRI. DEC. 4: A family night of music with Rosenshontz (Gary Rosen & Bill Shontz). A blend of folk, jazz, and humor. United Baptist Church, 250 Main St., Lewiston, 7:30 p.m. Admission \$2.00 adults/\$1.00 children.

SUN. DEC. 6: Film **From Mao to Mozart—Isaac Stern in China** (1981 Academy Award winning Best Documentary). Twin Cinema, Promenade Mall, Lewiston, 2:00 p.m. Admission \$2.00.

## SPECIALS:

**HARRISON MISTLETOE FAIR:** presented by the Ladies Circle of the Calvary Community Church, Sat. Nov. 21, 8-2. Lunch available.

**SUMNER HISTORICAL SOCIETY:** Meets the last Thurs. of each month at Universalist Church in West Sumner, 7:30 p.m. Everyone welcome.

**OUR SHAKER HERITAGE:** A community-school educational series sponsored by S.A.D. #15 in Gray. Lecture topics and dates will be: "The Middle Years to the Present" by Gerald Wertkin of the American Museum of Folk Art, Mon., Nov. 23, Shaker Village, 7:30 p.m.; "The Shakers In Context, Theology, Economics & Social Order" by Brother Theodore Johnson and other speakers, Mon., Nov. 30, Shaker Village, 7:30 p.m. For more information, phone Larry Koch (657-3335).

**CONNECTICUT BALLET:** presented by Forum-A at Cony High School, Augusta. Under the direction of Robert Vickery, this company, which has performed at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, will present selections from Bach and two George Balanchine ballets. Cony High School, Augusta, Thurs. Nov. 5, 8 p.m. Tickets \$5, \$6, \$7. For reservations call 622-7131, ext. 212.

## MUSIC

**CANADIAN BRASS:** Portland Symphony Orchestra, Tues. Nov. 3, City Hall Auditorium, Portland, 7:45 p.m. Admission.

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# Can You Place It?

If you recognize this month's **Can You Place It**, not substantially changed from the time of the photograph (about 1910), please write us at **P. O. Box 6, Norway ME 04268** and identify it. The first to send in a correct identification wins a year's free subscription to **BitterSweet**.



## Potato Digging Time

Winifred Maxim Merrill of Harrison sent us last month's **Can You Place It?**, a photo taken very early in this century. Woodstock's North Pond was in the background. She wrote: "The potato field is in Bethel, and on the mountain at the left is a stone marker which marks a corner where Woodstock, Greenwood, and Bethel join. As a child I remember the thrill my brothers and I got sitting on the stone and saying we were in three towns at the same time."

"Father enjoyed raising potatoes. He built a sprouter from directions he sent away for and but for that device he could not have profited from raising potatoes. It consisted of wood slats in the form of a cylinder, one end being higher than the other. The seed potatoes were put into the high end, a half bushel or so at a time, and as a crank was turned . . . the sprouts fell between the slats and the sprouted potatoes came out at the lower end of the machine. They were then cut so that each piece had at least one eye, before they were planted in rows about thirty inches apart. After the plants came up they were "hilled up" or covered with earth to prevent the new potatoes being exposed to the light. They were hoed by hand and cultivated with a horse several times to control weeds and keep the soil stirred up. When they were dug by hand, two rows were dug together as shown in picture. After digging they were allowed to lay and dry in the air before being picked up and put into burlap bags and stored loose in a bin in the cellar until spring, or sold before storing, depending on the market price."

**RICHARD ROBERTS, PIANIST:**  
Weds. Nov. 4, Moulton Theatre, Westbrook College, Portland, 8:15 p.m. Admission.

**NORTHERN BORDER CALEDONIA HIGHLANDERS:** Performing Arts Center at Bath, Sat. Nov. 7, 8 p.m. Admission.

**CANDLELIGHT SERIES:** Portland Symphony Chamber Orchestra: Ives *Symphony No. 3*, Schwartz *Chamber Concerto III*, Bach/Webern *Ricercare*, Haydn, *Symphony No. 73*, Eastland Hotel Ballroom, Portland, 7:45 p.m. Admission. Sun., Nov. 8.

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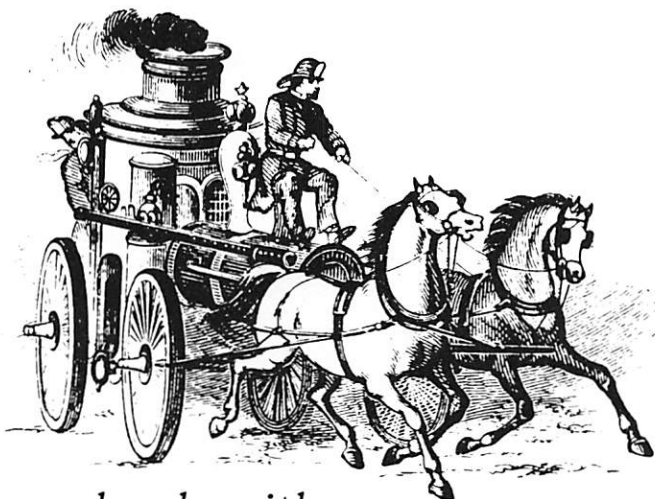
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